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"'Tell me how that was managed, Countess,' said the King."

THE ROMANCES OF

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

ANGE PITOU

Volume Two

The Marie Antoinette Romances, v. 9

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE TRIANGLE.

On reaching the door of the office in which the archives were kept, Gilbert perceived that a large heap of old papers was being burnt.

Unhappily, it is a general consequence that after having obtained a victory, the first desire the people have to gratify is that of destruction.

The archives of the Bastille had been invaded.

This office was a vast hall, heaped up with registry books and plans; the documents relating to all the prisoners who had been confined in the Bastille during the last hundred years were confusedly enclosed in it.

The people tore these papers to pieces with senseless rage; it doubtless appeared to them that, by destroying these registrations of imprisonment, they were legally bestowing freedom on the prisoners.

Gilbert went into the hall; seconded by Pitou, he began to examine the register books, which were still standing on the shelves; that of the current year was not to be found.

The doctor, a man who was always so cool and calm, turned pale, and stamped with impatience.

At that moment Pitou caught sight of one of those heroic urchins who are always to be found in popular triumphs, who was carrying off on his head, and running with it towards the fire, a volume similar in shape and binding to that which Dr. Gilbert had been examining.

He ran after him, and, with his long legs, speedily overtook him.

It was the register of the year 1789.

The negotiation did not occupy much time. Pitou was considered as one of the leaders of the conquerors, and explained to the boy that a prisoner had occasion to use that register, and the urchin yielded up his prey to him, consoling himself with the observation, —

"It is all the same to me; I can burn another."

Pitou opened the book, turned over the leaves, hunted through it, and on the last page found the words: —

"This day, the 9th July, 1789, came in the Sieur G., a philosopher and political writer, a very dangerous person; to be kept in close and secret confinement."

He carried the book to the doctor.

"Here, Monsieur Gilbert," said he to him, "is not this what you are seeking for?"

"Oh!" cried the doctor, joyfully, and seizing hold of the book, "yes, that is it."

And he read the words we have given above.

"And now," said he, "let us see from whom the order emanated."

And he examined the margin.

"Necker!" he exclaimed; "the order for my arrest signed by Necker, my friend Necker! Oh, most assuredly there must have been some foul plot!"

"Necker is your friend?" cried the crowd with respect; for it will be remembered that this name had great influence with the people.

"Yes, yes, my friends," said the doctor; "I am convinced that Monsieur Necker did not know that I was in prison. But I will at once go to him."

"Go to him, — and where?" inquired Billot.

"To Versailles, to be sure."

"Monsieur Necker is not at Versailles; Monsieur Necker is exiled."

"And where?"

"At Brussels."

"But his daughter?"

"Ah! I know nothing of her," replied Billot.

"His daughter is at his country-house, at St. Ouen," said a voice from the crowd.

"I am obliged to you," replied Gilbert, not knowing even to whom his thanks were addressed.

Then, turning towards those who were occupied in burning the papers: —

"My friends," he said, "in the name of history, which in these archives would find matter for the condemnation of tyrants, let me conjure you not to pursue this work of destruction; demolish the Bastille, stone by stone, that not a vestige, not a trace of it may remain, but respect the papers, respect the registers; the enlightenment of the future is contained in them."

The crowd had scarcely heard these words, than, with its usual admirable intelligence, it duly weighed this reasoning.

"The doctor is right," cried a hundred voices; "no more devastation of these papers. Let us remove all these papers to the Hôtel de Ville."

A fireman who, with a number of his companions, had dragged an engine into the courtyard, on hearing the report that the governor was about to blow up the fortress, directed the pipe of his hose upon the burning pile, which, like to that of Alexandria, was about to destroy the archives of a world; in a few minutes it was extinguished.

"And at whose request were you arrested?" said Billot to Gilbert.

"Ah! that is precisely what I am endeavoring to discover and cannot ascertain, — the name is left in blank."

Then, after a moment's reflection: —

"But I will find it out," said he.

And tearing out the leaf on which the entry was made regarding him, he folded it up, and put it into his pocket. Then, addressing himself to Billot and Pitou: —

"My friends," said he, "let us leave this place; we have nothing further to do here."

"Well, let us go," replied Billot; "only it is a thing more easily said than done."

And in fact the crowd, urged into the interior courtyards by curiosity, were so closely packed that egress was almost impossible. And, to add to the difficulty, the other liberated prisoners were standing close to the principal gate.

Eight prisoners, including Gilbert, had been liberated that morning.

Their names were: Jean Bechade, Bernard Laroche, Jean Lacaurège, Antoine Pujade, De White, Le Comte de Solage, and Tavernier.

The first four inspired but little interest. They were accused of having forged a bill of exchange, without any proof whatsoever being brought against them, and which led to the supposition that the charge against them was false; they had been only two years in the Bastille.

The Count de Solage was a man about thirty years of age, of joyous and expansive temperament; he embraced his liberators, congratulated them upon their victory, which he loudly extolled, and related to them the story of his captivity. He had been arrested in 1782, and imprisoned at Vincennes, his father having obtained a

lettre de cachet against him, and was removed from that castle to the Bastille, where he had remained five years, without ever having seen a judge, or having been examined even once; his father had been dead two years, and no one had ever thought of him. If the Bastille had not been taken, it is probable that no one would have ever remembered that he was there.

De White was a man advanced in years, somewhere about sixty; he uttered strangely incoherent words, and with a foreign accent. To the questions which poured in upon him from all sides, he replied that he did not know how long he had been incarcerated, or what had been the cause of his arrest. He remembered that he was the cousin of Monsieur de Sartines, and that was all. One of the turnkeys, whose name was Guyon, said that he had seen Monsieur de Sartines, on one occasion, go into De White's cell, where he made him sign a power of attorney. But the prisoner had completely forgotten the circumstance.

Tavernier was the oldest of them all. He had been shut up for ten years in the Iles Ste. Marguerite; thirty years had he been immured in the Bastille. He was upwards of ninety years old, with white hair and long white beard; his eyes had become dimmed by remaining so long in a dark cell, and he saw everything as through a cloud. When the crowd broke open his door, he could not comprehend what they wanted with him; when they spoke to him of liberty, he shook his head; then afterwards, when they told him that the Bastille was taken:

"Ho! ho!" cried he, "what will Louis XV., Madame de Pompadour, and the Duke de la Vrillière say to all this?"

Tavernier was not even mad, like De White; he had become an idiot

The joy of these men was frightful to behold, for it cried aloud for vengeance, so much did it resemble terror. Two or three of them seemed almost expiring in the midst of the clamor raised by a hundred thousand voices. Poor men! they who, during the whole time of their confinement in the Bastille, had never heard two human voices speaking at the same moment, — they who were no longer accustomed to any noises but the low and mysterious one of wood, when warping with the damp, that of the spider, when, unperceived, he weaves his net with a ticking similar to that of an invisible pendulum, or of the affrighted rat, which gnaws and flies at the least stir.

At the moment that Gilbert made his appearance, the most enthusiastic among the crowd proposed that the prisoners should be carried in triumph, — a proposal which was unanimously adopted.

Gilbert would have much desired to avoid this species of ovation; but there were no means of escaping it; he had been at once recognized, as well as Billot and Pitou.

Cries of "To the Hôtel de Ville! to the Hôtel de Ville!" resounded on all sides, and Gilbert was raised in an instant on the shoulders of twenty persons.

In vain did the doctor resist, in vain did Billot and Pitou distribute among their victorious brethren the most vigorous fisticuffs; joy and enthusiasm had hardened the skins of the populace. These, and even blows given with pike-handles and the butt-ends of muskets, appeared only gentle caresses to the conquerors, and only served to redouble their delight.

Gilbert was therefore compelled to mount the triumphal car.

This car was formed of a square table, in the middle of

which was stuck a lance, to serve as a support to the victor, and enable him to preserve his balance.

The doctor, therefore, was raised above this sea of heads, which undulated from the Bastille to the Arcade St. Jean, a tempestuous sea, whose waves were bearing, in the midst of pikes and bayonets, and arms of every description, of every form, and of every age, the triumphant prisoners.

But at the same time this terrible and irresistible ocean was rolling on another group, so compact and closely formed that it appeared an island. This group was the one which was leading away De Launay as a prisoner.

Around this group arose cries not less tumultuous nor less enthusiastic than those which accompanied the prisoners; but they were not shouts of triumph, they were threats of death.

Gilbert, from his elevated position, did not lose a single detail of this frightful spectacle.

He was the only one among all the prisoners who had been restored to liberty, who was in the enjoyment of all his faculties. Five days of captivity were merely a dark spot in his life. His eyes had not been weakened or rendered dim by his short sojourn in the Bastille.

A combat, generally, does not have the effect of rendering the combatants pitiless excepting during the time that it continues. Men, generally, when issuing from a struggle in which they have risked their lives, without receiving injury, are full of kindly feelings towards their enemies.

But in great popular commotions, such as those of which France has seen so many from the times of the Jacquerie down to our own days, the masses whom fear has withheld from aiding in the fight, whom noise has

irritated, the masses, at once ferocious and cowardly, endeavor, after the victory has been gained, to claim their share of the triumph which they had not dared to accelerate. They take their share in the vengeance.

From the moment of his leaving the Bastille, the procession was the commencement of the governor's execution.

Elie, who had taken the governor's life under his own responsibility, marched at the head of the group, protected by his uniform and by the admiration of the people, who had seen him one of the first to advance amid the enemy's fire. He carried his sword above his head, on the point of which was the note which Monsieur de Launay had caused to be handed to the people through one of the loop-holes of the Bastille, and which had been brought by Maillard.

After him came the guard of the royal taxes, holding in his hand the keys of the fortress; then Maillard, bearing the standard; and after him a young man carrying the regulations of the Bastille on his bayonet, — an odious rescript by means of which so many bitter tears had flowed.

The governor walked next, protected by Hullin and two or three others, but disappeared amid the throng of threatening fists, of waving sabres, and of quivering lances.

By the side of this group, and rolling onward in an almost parallel line with it in the great artery of the Rue St. Antoine, which leads from the Boulevard to the river, another could be distinguished, not less threatening, not less terrible than the first. It was that which was dragging forward Major de Losme, whom we have seen for a moment combating the will of the governor, and who had at length been compelled to bow down his

head before the determination which De Launay had taken to defend himself.

Major de Losme was a worthy, brave, and excellent young man. Since he had been in the Bastille he had alleviated the sorrows of many of the prisoners by his kind treatment of them. But the people were ignorant of this. The people, from his brilliant uniform, imagined that he was the governor. Whereas the governor, thanks to his gray coat, on which there was no embroidery whatsoever, and from which he had torn the ribbon of the order of St. Louis, was surrounded as it were by a protecting doubt which could be dispelled by those only who were acquainted with his person.

Such was the spectacle which offered itself to the grieved eyes of Doctor Gilbert. His face, even in the midst of dangers, bore always a calm and observing expression, — a quality which was inherent in his powerful organization.

Hullin, on leaving the Bastille, had called around him his most trusty and devoted friends, the most valiant of the popular soldiers of that day, and four or five had responded to his call, and endeavored to second him in his generous design of protecting the governor. Among them are three men of whom impartial history has consecrated the memory; their names were Arné, Chollat, and De Lépine.

These men, preceded as we have said by Hullin and Maillard, were therefore endeavoring to defend the life of one for whose death a hundred thousand men were clamorously calling.

Around them had ranged themselves some grenadiers of the French Guard, whose uniform, having become popular during the last two days, was an object of veneration to the people.

Monsieur de Launay had escaped receiving any blow as long as the arms of his generous defenders were able to ward them off; but he had not escaped insulting language and threats.

At the corner of the Rue de Jouy, of the five grenadiers of the French Guards who had joined the procession on leaving the Bastille, not one remained. They had one after the other been carried off on the way, by the enthusiasm of the crowd, and perhaps also by the calculation of assassins, and Gilbert had seen them disappear one after the other, like beads from a rosary of which the cord had been broken.

From that moment he had foreseen that the victory which had been gained was about to be tarnished by a sanguinary sacrifice; he had attempted to jump from the table which served him as a triumphal car, but arms of iron had riveted him to it. In his powerless position, he had directed Billot and Pitou to rush forward to defend the governor, and both of them, obedient to his voice, had made every effort to cleave through the human waves and get near to Monsieur de Launay.

And in fact the little group of his defenders stood in great need of a reinforcement. Chollat, who had not tasted food since the previous evening, had felt his strength giving way, and at length had fainted; it was with great difficulty that he had been raised and saved from being trampled under foot.

But this was a breach made in the wall, a falling-in of the dyke.

A man rushed through this breach, and whirling the butt of his gun over his head, aimed a deadly blow at the uncovered head of the governor.

But De Lépine, who saw the terrific blow descending, had time enough to throw himself with outstretched arms

between the governor and his assailant, and received on his forehead the blow intended for the governor.

Stunned by the shock, blinded with his own blood, which streamed into his eyes, he staggered, and covered his face with his hands, and when he could again see, the governor was twenty paces from him.

It was at this moment that Billot, dragging Pitou after him through the crowd, came up to him.

He perceived that what exposed Monsieur de Launay, above all, to observation, was his being the only man in the crowd who was bareheaded.

Billot took his hat, stretched out his arm, and placed it on the governor's head.

De Launay turned round and recognized Billot.

"I thank you," he said; "but whatever you may do, you will not save me."

"Let us only reach the Hôtel de Ville," said Hullin, "and I will answer for your safety."

"Yes," replied De Launay, "but shall we reach it?"

"With the help of God, we will attempt it," rejoined Hullin.

And in fact there was some hope of succeeding, for they were just entering the square before the Hôtel de Ville; but this square was thronged with men with naked arms, brandishing pikes and sabres. The report, which had flown from street to street, had announced to them that the governor and the major of the Bastille were being brought to them; and like a pack of hungry hounds eager to be loosed upon their prey, they awaited, grinding their teeth and impatient for their approach.

As soon as they saw the procession approach they rushed towards the governor.

Hullin saw that this was the moment of extreme danger, of the last struggle; if he could only get the

governor to the front steps, and get him to rush up the staircase, De Launay was saved.

"To me, Elie! — to me, Maillard! — to me, all men with hearts," cried he: "our honor is at stake."

Elie and Maillard heard the appeal; they made a rush into the centre of the mob, and the people seconded them but too well; they made way for them to pass, but closed in behind them.

In this manner Elie and Maillard were separated from the principal group, and were prevented returning to it.

The crowd saw the advantage it had gained, and made a furious effort. Like an enormous boa, it entwined its gigantic folds around the group. Billot was lifted off his feet and dragged away; Pitou, who thought only of Billot, allowed himself to be forced away in the same throng. Hullin, being hurried on by the crowd, stumbled against the first step of the Hôtel de Ville, and fell. He got up, but it was to fall again almost immediately, and this time De Launay fell with him.

The governor was constant to the last; up to the final moment, he uttered not a single complaint; he did not ask for mercy, but he cried out in a loud, shrill tone, —

"Tigers that you are, at all events do not allow me to remain thus in suspense; kill me at once!"

Never was order more promptly executed than this reproachful request of the poor governor. In an instant around the fallen De Launay every head was bowed down towards him. For a moment nothing could be seen but upraised and threatening hands, grasping poniards which as suddenly disappeared; then was seen a head severed from the body, and which was raised, still streaming with blood, upon the end of a pike; the features had retained their livid and contemptuous smile.

This was the first.

Gilbert, from his elevated position, could see all that was passing; Gilbert had once more attempted to spring to the assistance of the governor, but two hundred arms prevented him.

He turned his head from the disgusting spectacle and sighed.

This head, with its staring eyes, was raised immediately in front, and as if to salute him with a last look, of the window in which De Flesselles was standing, surrounded and protected by the electors.

It would have been difficult to decide whether the face of the living or that of the dead man was the most pale and livid.

Suddenly an immense uproar arose from the spot on which was lying the mutilated body of De Launay. His pockets had been searched by his assassins, and in his breast-pocket had been found the note which the Provost of the Merchants had addressed to him, and which he had shown to De Losme.

This note, our readers may remember, was couched in the following terms: —

Hold firm! — I amuse the Parisians with cockades and promises. Before the close of the day Monsieur de Besenval will send you a reinforcement.

DE FLESSELLES.

The most blasphemous imprecations rose from the pavement of the square to the window of the Hôtel de Ville in which De Flesselles was standing.

Without guessing the cause of this new tumult, he fully comprehended the threat, and hastily drew back from the window; but he had been seen; every one knew that he was there; the crowd rushed up the staircase,

and this time the movement was so universal that the men who had been carrying Doctor Gilbert abandoned him to follow the living tide which in a tempest of passion was overflowing the great staircase.

Gilbert would also have gone into the Hotel de Ville, not to threaten but to protect Flesselles. He had already ascended three or four of the front steps, when he felt himself violently pulled back. He turned round to disengage himself from this new obstruction, but he recognized Billot and Pitou.

"Oh!" exclaimed Gilbert, who from his commanding position could glance over the whole square, "what can they be doing yonder?"

And he pointed with his convulsively clinched hand to the corner of the Rue de la Tixéranderie.

"Come with us, Doctor, come!" simultaneously cried Billot and Pitou.

"Oh, the assassins!" cried the doctor, "the assassins!"

And indeed at that moment Major de Losme fell, killed by a desperate blow from a hatchet, — the people confounding in their rage the egotistical and barbarous governor, who had been the persecutor of his prisoners, with the generous man who had been their friend and reliever.

"Oh, yes, yes," said he, "let us be gone, for I begin to be ashamed of having been liberated by such men."

"Doctor," said Billot, "be not uneasy on that score. The men who fought down yonder are not the same men who are committing these horrid massacres."

But at the moment when the doctor was about to descend the steps which he had gone up, to hasten to the assistance of Flesselles, the flood which had poured into the building was again vomited forth. Amid this torrent

of men was one who was struggling furiously as they dragged him forward.

"To the Palais Royal! to the Palais Royal!" cried the crowd.

"Yes, my friends — yes, my good friends — to the Palais Royal!" repeated the man.

And they went towards the river, as if this human inundation had wished, not to bear him towards the Palais Royal, but to drag him towards the Seine.

"Oh!" cried Gilbert, "here is another they are about to murder! — let us endeavor to save him at least." But scarcely had he pronounced these words when a pistol-shot was heard, and De Flesselles disappeared amid the smoke.

Gilbert covered his eyes with both his hands, with a gesture of excessive anger; he cursed the people who, after having shown themselves so great, had not the firmness to remain pure, and had sullied the victory they had gained by a triple assassination.

Then, when he removed his hands from his eyes, he saw three heads raised above the crowd, on three pikes.

The first was that of De Flesselles, the second that of De Losme, the third that of De Launay.

The one rose above the front steps of the Hôtel de Ville, the other from the middle of the Rue de la Tixéranderie, the third on the Quai Pelletier.

From their relative positions they assumed the form of a triangle.

"Oh, Balsamo! Balsamo!" murmured the doctor, with a sigh; "is it then such a triangle as this that is to be symbolical of liberty!"

And he ran along the Rue de la Vannerie, Billot and Pitou accompanying him.

CHAPTER XX.

SEBASTIEN GILBERT.

At the corner of the Rue Planche Mibray the doctor met a hackney coach, made a sign to the coachman to stop, and hastily got into it.

Billot and Pitou quickly followed him.

"To the College of Louis-le-Grand!" cried Gilbert, and threw himself into one corner of the vehicle, where he fell into a profound reverie, which was respected by Billot and Pitou.

They went over the Pont au Change by the Rue de la Cité, the Rue St. Jacques, and at length reached the College Louis-le-Grand.

All Paris was trembling with emotion. The news had spread rapidly throughout the city; rumors of the assassinations on the Place de la Grève were mingled with the glorious recital of the taking of the Bastille. On every face could be seen depicted the various emotions to which the news gave rise, according to the varied feelings they excited, — the lightnings of the soul which thus betrayed themselves.

Gilbert had not once looked out of the coach window; Gilbert had not uttered a single word. There is always a ridiculous side in popular ovations, and Gilbert contemplated his ovation in that point of view.

And besides, it also appeared to him that notwithstanding all he had done to prevent it, some drops of the blood which had been shed would fall upon his head.

The doctor alighted from the hackney coach at the college gate, and made a sign to Billot to follow him.

As to Pitou, he discreetly remained in the coach.

Sebastien was still in the infirmary; the principal in person, on Doctor Gilbert's being announced, conducted him thither.

Billot, who, although not a very acute observer, well knew the character of both father and son, — Billot attentively observed the scene which was passing before his eyes.

Weak, irritable, and nervous, as the boy had shown himself in the moment of despair, he evinced an equal degree of tranquillity and reserve in the moment of joy.

On perceiving his father he turned pale, and words failed him. His lips quivered, and then he ran and threw his arms round his father's neck, uttering a cry of joy, which resembled a cry of grief, and then held him silently clasped within his arms.

The doctor responded as silently to this mute pressure; only, after having embraced his son, he looked at him with an expression that was more sorrowful than joyous.

A more skilful observer than Billot would have said that some misfortune or some crime existed in the relations between that youth and that man.

The youth was less reserved in his conduct towards Billot. When he could observe any one excepting his father, who had in the first moment engrossed all his attention, he ran to the good farmer, and threw his arms round his neck, saying, —

"You are a worthy man, Monsieur Billot; you have kept your promise to me, and I thank you for it."

"Yes, yes," replied Billot, "and it was not without some trouble, I can assure you, Monsieur Sebastien. Your father was very nicely and safely locked up, and it

was necessary to do a tolerable deal of damage before we could get him out."

"Sebastien," inquired the doctor with some anxiety, "you are in good health?"

"Yes, Father," replied the young man, "although you find me here in the infirmary."

Gilbert smiled.

"I know why it was you were brought here," said he.

The boy smiled in his turn.

"Have you everything you require here?" continued the doctor.

"Everything — thanks to you."

"I shall then, my dear boy, still recommend to you the same, the only line of conduct, — study assiduously."

"Yes, Father."

"I know that to you the word 'study' is not a vain and monotonous word; if I believed it to be so, I would no longer say it."

"Father, it is not for me to reply to you on that head. It is the province of Monsieur Bérardier, our excellent principal."

The doctor turned towards Monsieur Bérardier, who made a sign that he had something to say to him.

"I will speak to you again in a moment, Sebastien," said the doctor.

And he went over to the principal.

"Sir," said Sebastien, with anxious feeling, to Billot, "can anything unfortunate have happened to Pitou? The poor lad is not with you."

"He is at the door in a hackney coach," replied Billot.

"Father," said Sebastien, "will you allow Monsieur Billot to fetch Pitou to me? I should be very glad to see him."

Gilbert gave an affirmative nod; Billot left the room.

"What is it you would say to me?" inquired Gilbert of the Abbé Bérardier.

"I wished to tell you, sir, that it is not study that you should recommend to the young lad, but, on the contrary, to amuse himself."

"And on what account, good abbé?"

"Yes, he is an excellent young man, whom everybody here loves as a son or as a brother, but —"

The abbé paused.

"But what?" cried Gilbert, with anxiety.

"But if great care be not taken, Monsieur Gilbert, there is something that will kill him."

"And what is that?" said Gilbert.

"The study which you so strongly recommend to him."

"Study?"

"Yes, sir, study. If you could but see him seated at his desk, his arms crossed, poring over his dictionary, with eyes fixed —"

"Studying, or dreaming?" asked Gilbert.

"Studying, sir; endeavoring to find a good expression — the antique style, the Greek or Latin form — seeking for it for hours together; and see! even at this very moment! — look at him!"

And indeed the young man, although it was not five minutes since his father had been speaking to him, although Billot had scarcely shut the door after him, had fallen into a reverie which seemed closely allied to ecstasy.

"Is he often thus?" anxiously inquired Gilbert.

"Sir, I could almost say that this is his habitual state; only see how deeply he is meditating."

"You are right, sir; and when you observe him in this state, you should endeavor to divert his thoughts."

"And yet it would be a pity, for the results of these meditations are compositions which will one day do great honor to the College Louis-le-Grand. I predict that in three years from this time that youth yonder will bear off all the prizes at our examination."

"Take care!" replied the doctor; "this species of absorption of thought, in which you see Sebastien now plunged, is rather a proof of weakness than of strength, a symptom rather of malady than of health. You are right, Monsieur Principal; it will not do to recommend assiduous application to that child; or, at least, we must know how to distinguish study from such a state of reverie."

"Sir, I can assure you that he is studying."

"What, as we see him now?"

"Yes; and the proof is that his task is always finished before that of the other scholars. Do you see how his lips move? He is repeating his lessons."

"Well, then, whenever he is repeating his lessons in this manner, Monsieur Bérardier, divert his attention from them. He will not know his lessons the worse for it, and his health will be better for it."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"Well," cried the good abbé, "you ought to understand these matters, — you, whom Messieurs de Condorcet and Cabanis proclaim to be one of the most learned men now existing in the world."

"Only," rejoined Gilbert, "when you wish to draw him out of such reveries, you must do it with much precaution. Speak to him very softly in the first instance, and then louder."

"And why so?"

"To bring him gradually back to this world, which his mind has left."

The abbé looked at the doctor with astonishment. It would not have required much to make him believe that he was mad.

"Observe," continued the doctor; "you shall see the proof of what I am saying to you."

Billot and Pitou entered the room at this moment. In three strides Pitou was at the side of the dreaming youth.

"You asked for me, Sebastien," said Pitou to him; "that was very kind of you."

And he placed his large head close to the pale face of the young lad.

"Look!" said Gilbert, seizing the abbé's arm.

And indeed Sebastien, thus abruptly aroused from his reverie by the cordial affection of Pitou, staggered, his pale face became livid, his head fell on one side, as if his neck had not sufficient strength to support it, a painful sigh escaped his breast, and then the blood again rushed to his face.

He shook his head and smiled.

"Ah, it is you, Pitou. Yes; that is true: I asked for you."

And then, looking at him:—

"You have been fighting, then?"

"Yes, and like a brave lad, too," said Billot.

"Why did you not take me with you?" said the child, in a reproachful tone. "I would have fought also, and then I should at least have done something for my father."

"Sebastien," said Gilbert, going to his son, and pressing his head to his breast, "you can do much more for your father than to fight for him; you can listen to his advice, and follow it, — become a distinguished and celebrated man."

"As you are?" said the boy, with proud emotion. "Oh, it is that which I aspire to."

"Sebastien," said the doctor, "now that you have embraced both Billot and Pitou, our good friends, will you come into the garden with me for a few minutes, that we may have a little talk together?"

"With great delight, Father. Only two or three times in my whole life have I been alone with you, and those moments, with all their details, are always present in my memory."

"You will allow us, good Monsieur Principal?" said Gilbert.

"How can you doubt it?"

"Billot and Pitou, you must, my friends, stand in need of some refreshment?"

"Upon my word, I do," said Billot. "I have eaten nothing since the morning, and I believe that Pitou has fasted as long as I have."

"I beg your pardon," replied Pitou: "I ate a crumb of bread and two or three sausages, just the moment before I dragged you out of the water; but a bath always makes one hungry."

"Well, then, come to the refectory," said the Abbé Bérardier, "and you shall have some dinner."

"Ho, ho!" cried Pitou.

"You are afraid of our college fare!" cried the abbé; "but do not alarm yourselves; you shall be treated as invited guests. Moreover, it appears to me," continued the abbé, "that it is not alone your stomach that is in a dilapidated state, my dear Monsieur Pitou."

Pitou cast a look replete with modesty on his own person.

"And that if you were offered a pair of breeches as well as a dinner—"

"The fact is, I would accept them, good Monsieur Bérardier," replied Pitou.

"Well, then, come with me; both the breeches and the dinner are at your service."

And he led off Billot and Pitou by one door, while Gilbert and his son, waving their hands to them, went out at another.

The latter crossed a yard which served as a playground to the young collegians, and went into a small garden reserved for the professors, a cool and shady retreat, in which the venerable Abbé Bérardier was wont to read his Tacitus and his Juvenal.

Gilbert seated himself upon a bench, overshadowed by an alcove of clematis and virgin vines; then, drawing Sebastien close to him, and parting the long hair which fell upon his forehead: —

"Well, my child," said he, "we are, then, once more united."

Sebastien raised his eyes to heaven.

"Yes, Father, and by a miracle performed by God."

Gilbert smiled.

"If there be any miracle," said Gilbert, "it was the brave people of Paris who have accomplished it."

"My father," said the boy, "set not God aside in all that has just occurred; for I, when I saw you come in, instinctively offered my thanks to God for your deliverance."

"And Billot?"

"Billot I thanked after thanking God, as I thanked his carabine after Billot."

Gilbert reflected.

"You are right, child," said he; "God is in everything. But now let us talk of you, and let us have some little conversation before we again separate."

"Are we, then, to be again separated, Father?"

"Not for a long time, I presume. But a casket, containing some very precious documents, has disappeared from Billot's house, at the same time that I was arrested and sent to the Bastille. I must therefore endeavor to discover who it was that caused my imprisonment, — who has carried off the casket."

"It is well, Father. I will wait to see you again, — till your inquiries shall be completed."

And the boy sighed deeply.

"You are sorrowful, Sebastien?" said the doctor, inquiringly.

"Yes."

"And why are you sorrowful?"

"I do not know. It appears to me that life has not been shaped for me in the way it has been for other children."

"What are you saying there, Sebastien?"

"The truth."

"Explain yourself."

"They all have amusements, pleasures, while I have none."

"You have no amusements, no pleasures?"

"I mean to say, Father, that I take no pleasure in those games which form the amusement of boys of my own age."

"Take care, Sebastien; I should much regret that you should be of such a disposition. Sebastien, minds that give promise of a glorious future are like good fruits during their growth; they have their bitterness, their acidity, their greenness, before they can delight the palate by their matured full flavor. Believe me, my child, it is good to have been young."

"It is not my fault if I am not so," replied the young

man, with a melancholy smile. Gilbert pressed both his son's hands within his own, and fixing his eye intently upon Sebastien's, continued: —

"Your age, my son, is that of the seed when germinating; nothing should yet appear above the surface of all that study has sown in you. At the age of fourteen, Sebastien, gravity is either pride, or it proceeds from malady. I have asked you whether your health was good, and you replied affirmatively. I am going to ask you whether you are proud; try to reply to me that you are not."

"Father," said the boy, "on that head you need not be alarmed. That which renders me so gloomy is neither sickness nor pride; no, it is a settled grief."

"A settled grief, poor child! And what grief, good heaven, can you have at your age? Come, now, speak out."

"No, Father, no; some other time. You have told me that you were in a hurry. You have only a quarter of an hour to devote to me. Let us speak of other things than my follies."

"No, Sebastien; I should be uneasy were I to leave you so. Tell me whence proceeds your grief."

"In truth, Father, I do not dare."

"What do you fear?"

"I fear that in your eyes I shall appear a visionary, or perhaps that I may speak to you of things that will afflict you."

"You afflict me much more by withholding your secret from me."

"You well know that I have no secrets from you, Father."

"Speak out, then."

"Really, I dare not."

"Sebastien, you who have the pretension of being a man, to —"

"It is precisely for that reason."

"Come, now, take courage."

"Well, then, Father, it is a dream."

"A dream which terrifies you?"

"Yes, and no; for when I am dreaming, I am not terrified, but as if transported into another world."

"Explain yourself."

"When still quite a child I had these visions. You cannot but remember that two or three times I lost myself in those great woods which surround the village in which I was brought up?"

"Yes, I remember being told of it."

"Well, then, at those times I was following a species of phantom."

"What say you?" cried Gilbert, looking at his son with an astonishment that seemed closely allied to terror.

"Well, then, Father, I will tell you all. I used to play, as did the other children in the village. As long as there were children with me, or near me, I saw nothing; but if I separated from them, or went beyond the last village garden, I felt something near, like the rustling of a gown. I would stretch out my arms to catch it, and I embraced only the air; but as the rustling sound became lost in distance, the phantom itself became visible. It was at first a vapor as transparent as a cloud; then the vapor became more condensed, and assumed a human form. The form was that of a woman gliding along the ground rather than walking, and becoming more and more visible as it plunged into the shady parts of the forest. Then an unknown, extraordinary, and almost irresistible power impelled me to pursue this

form. I pursued her with outstretched arms, mute as herself, for often I attempted to call to her, and never could my tongue articulate a sound. I pursued her thus, although she never stopped, although I never could come up with her, until the same prodigy which announced her presence to me warned me of her departure. This woman vanished gradually from my sight, matter became once more vapor, the vapor became volatilized, and all was ended; and I, exhausted with fatigue, would fall down on the spot where she had disappeared. It was there that Pitou would find me, sometimes the same day, but sometimes only the next morning."

Gilbert continued gazing at his son with increasing anxiety. He had placed his fingers on his pulse. Sebastien at once comprehended the feeling which agitated the doctor.

"Oh, do not be uneasy, Father," said he. "I know that there was nothing real in all this. I know that it was a vision, and nothing more."

"And this woman," inquired the doctor, "what was her appearance?"

"Oh, as majestic as a queen."

"And her face; did you sometimes see it, child?"

"Yes."

"And how long ago?" asked Gilbert, shuddering.

"Only since I have been here," replied the youth.

"But here in Paris you have not the forest of Villers-Cotterets, the tall trees forming a dark and mysterious arch of verdure. In Paris you have no longer that silence, that solitude, the natural element of phantoms."

"Yes, Father, I have all these."

"Where, then?"

"Here, in this garden."

"What mean you by saying here? Is not this garden set apart for the professors?"

"It is so, my father; but two or three times it appeared to me that I saw this woman glide from the courtyard into the garden, and each time I would have followed her, but the closed door always prevented me. Then one day the Abbé Bérardier, being highly satisfied with my composition, asked me if there was anything I particularly desired; and I asked him to allow me sometimes to walk in the garden with him. He gave me the permission. I came; and here, Father, the vision reappeared to me."

Gilbert trembled.

"Strange hallucination," said he; "but, nevertheless, very possible in a temperament so highly nervous as his. And you have seen her face, then?"

"Yes, Father."

"Do you remember it?"

The youth smiled.

"Did you ever attempt to go near her?"

"Yes."

"To hold out your hand to her?"

"It was then that she would disappear."

"And in your own opinion, Sebastien, who is this woman?"

"It appears to me that she is my mother."

"Your mother!" exclaimed Gilbert, turning pale.

And he pressed his hand against his heart, as if to stop the bleeding of a painful wound.

"But this is all a dream," cried he; "and really I am almost as mad as you are."

The youth remained silent, and with pensive eye looked at his father.

"Well?" said the latter, in the accent of inquiry.

"Well," replied Sebastien, "it is possible that it may be all a dream; but the reality of my dream is no less existing."

"What say you?"

"I say that at the last Festival of Pentecost, when we were taken to walk in the wood of Satory, near Versailles, and that while there, as I was meditating under a tree, and separated from my companions —"

"The same vision again appeared to you?"

"Yes; but this time in a carriage, drawn by four magnificent horses. But this time real, absolutely living. I very nearly fainted."

"And why so?"

"I do not know."

"And what impression remained upon your mind from this new vision?"

"That it was not my mother whom I had seen appearing to me in a dream, since this woman was the same I always saw in my vision, and my mother is dead."

Gilbert rose and pressed his hand to his forehead. A strange swimming of the head had just seized him.

The young lad remarked his agitation, and was alarmed at his sudden paleness.

"Ah!" said he, "you see now, Father, how wrong I was to relate to you all my follies."

"No, my child, no. On the contrary," said the doctor, "speak of them often to me; speak of them to me every time you see me, and we will endeavor to cure you of them."

Sebastien shook his head.

"Cure me! and for what?" asked he. "I am accustomed to this dream. It has become a portion of my existence. I love that vision, although it flies from me, and sometimes seems to repel me. Do not, therefore, cure

me of it, Father. You may again leave me, travel once more, perhaps go again to America. Having this vision, I am not completely alone in the world."

"In fine," murmured the doctor, and pressing Sebastien to his breast, "till we meet again, my child," said he, "and then I hope we shall no more leave each other; for should I again leave France, I will at least endeavor to take you with me."

"Was my mother beautiful?" asked the child.

"Oh, yes, very beautiful!" replied the doctor, in a voice almost choked by emotion.

"And did she love you as much as I love you?"

"Sebastien! Sebastien! never speak to me of your mother!" cried the doctor.

And pressing his lips for the last time to the forehead of the youth, he rushed out of the garden.

Instead of following him, the child fell back, overcome by his feelings, on the bench.

In the courtyard Gilbert found Billot and Pitou, completely invigorated by the good cheer they had partaken of. They were relating to the Abbé Bérardier all the circumstances regarding the capture of the Bastille.

Gilbert again entered into conversation with the Abbé Bérardier, in which he pointed out to him the line of conduct he should observe with regard to Sebastien.

He then got into the hackney coach with his two companions.

CHAPTER XXI.

MADAME DE STAËL.

When Gilbert resumed his place in the hackney coach by the side of Billot and opposite to Pitou, he was pale, and the perspiration was standing in large drops on his forehead.

But it was not in the nature of this man to remain for any time overwhelmed by any emotion whatsoever. He threw himself back into the corner of the carriage, pressed both his hands to his forehead as if he wished to repress the boiling thoughts which raged within it, and after remaining a few moments motionless, he withdrew his hands, and instead of an agitated countenance, he exhibited features which were particularly calm.

"You told me, I think, my dear Monsieur Billot, that the king had dismissed Monsieur de Necker?"

"Yes, indeed, Monsieur Gilbert."

"And that the commotions in Paris originated in some measure from the disgrace of the minister?"

"Very much."

"And you added that Monsieur de Necker had immediately left Versailles."

"He received the king's letter while at dinner. In an hour afterwards he was on the road to Brussels."

"Where he is now?"

"Or ought to be."

"Did you not hear it said that he had stopped somewhere on the road?"

"Oh, yes; he stopped at St. Ouen, in order to take leave of his daughter, the Baroness de Staël."

"Did Madame de Staël go with him?"

"I was told that he and his wife alone set out for Brussels."

"Coachman!" cried Gilbert, "stop at the first tailor's shop you see."

"You wish to change your coat?" said Billot.

"Yes. In good sooth, this one smells too much of its contact with the walls of the Bastille; and a man cannot in such a dress discreetly pay a visit to the daughter of an ex-minister in disgrace. Search your pockets, and see if you cannot find a few louis for me."

"Ho, ho!" cried the farmer, "it seems that you have left your purse in the Bastille."

"That is according to the regulations," said Gilbert, smiling. "All articles of value are deposited in the registry office."

"And they remain there," said the farmer.

And opening his huge fist, which contained about twenty louis:—

"Take these, Doctor," said he.

Gilbert took ten louis. Some minutes afterwards the hackney coach stopped at the door of a ready-made clothes shop.

It was still the usage in those days.

Gilbert changed his coat, soiled by the walls of the Bastille, for a very decent black one, such as was worn by the gentlemen of the Tiers État in the National Assembly.

A hair-dresser in his shop, a Savoyard shoe-cleaner in his cellar, completed the doctor's toilette.

The doctor then ordered the coachman to drive him to St. Ouen, by the exterior Boulevards, which they reached by going behind the walls of the park at Monceaux.

Gilbert alighted at the gate of Monsieur Necker's house, at the moment when the cathedral clock of Dagobert struck seven in the evening.

Around this house, which erewhile was so much sought, so much frequented, reigned the most profound silence, disturbed only by the arrival of Gilbert.

And yet there was none of that melancholy appearance which generally surrounds abandoned country-houses, — of that gloominess even generally visible in a mansion, the master of which has been disgraced.

The gates being closed, the garden-walks deserted, merely announced that the heads of the family were absent, but there was no trace of misfortune or of precipitation.

Besides this, one whole portion of the château, the east wing, had still its window-shutters open, and when Gilbert was advancing towards this side, a servant, wearing the livery of Monsieur de Necker, approached the visitor.

The following dialogue then took place through the iron gratings of the gate.

"Monsieur de Necker is not at home, my friend?" said Gilbert.

"No; the baron left St. Ouen last Saturday for Brussels."

"And her ladyship, the baroness?"

"Went with Monsieur."

"But Madame de Staël?"

"Madame de Staël has remained here; but I do not know whether madame will receive any one; it is her hour for walking."

"Please to find out where she is, and announce to her Doctor Gilbert."

"I will go and inquire whether madame is in the house or not. Doubtless she will receive you, sir; but should she be talking a walk, my orders are that she is not to be disturbed."

"Very well; go quickly, I beg of you."

The servant opened the gate, and Gilbert entered the grounds.

While relocking the gate, the servant cast an inquisitive glance on the vehicle which had brought the doctor, and on the extraordinary faces of his two travelling companions; then he went off, shaking his head, like a man who feels somewhat perplexed, but who defies any other intellect to see clearly into a matter where his own has been altogether puzzled.

Gilbert remained alone, waiting his return.

In about five minutes the servant reappeared.

"The Baroness de Staël is taking a walk," said he, and he bowed in order to dismiss Gilbert.

But the doctor was not so easily got rid of.

"My friend," said he, "be pleased to make a slight infraction in your orders, and tell the baroness, when you announce me to her, that I am a friend of the Marquis de Lafayette."

A louis, slipped into the lackey's hands, completely removed the scruples he had entertained, which the name of the marquis had nearly half dispelled.

"Come in, sir," said the servant.

Gilbert followed him; but instead of taking him into the house he led him into the park.

"This is the favorite walk of the baroness," said the lackey to Gilbert, pointing out to him the entrance to a species of labyrinth; "will you remain here a moment?"

Ten minutes afterwards he heard a rustling among the leaves, and a woman between twenty-three and twenty-four years of age, and of a figure rather noble than graceful, appeared to the eyes of Gilbert.

She seemed surprised on finding a man who still appeared young, when she had doubtless expected to meet one advanced in years.

Gilbert was a man of sufficiently remarkable appear ance to strike at first sight so able an observer as Madame de Staël.

The features of few men were formed with such pure lines, and these lines had assumed, by the exercise of an all-powerful will, a character of extraordinary inflexibility. His fine black eyes, which were always so expressive, had become somewhat veiled by his literary labors and the sufferings he had undergone, and had lost a portion of that mobility which is one of the charms of youth.

A wrinkle, which was at once deep and graceful, hollowed out at the corner of his thin lips, that mysterious cavity in which physiognomists place the seat of circumspection. It appeared that time alone, and a precocious old age, had given to Gilbert that quality with which nature had neglected to endow him.

A wide and well-rounded forehead, slightly receding towards the roots of his fine black hair, which for years powder had no longer whitened, gave evidence at once of knowledge and of thought, of study and imagination. With Gilbert, as with his master, Rousseau, his prominent eyebrows threw a deep shade over his eyes, and from this shade glanced forth the luminous rays which revealed life.

Gilbert, notwithstanding his unassuming dress, presented himself before the future authoress of "Corinne," with a remarkably dignified and distinguished air, — an

air of which his well-shaped tapering white hands, his small feet, and his finely formed and muscular legs, completed the noble appearance.

Madame de Staël devoted some moments to examining Gilbert.

During this, Gilbert, on his side, had given a stiff sort of bow, which slightly recalled the modest civility of the American Quakers, who grant to women only the fraternity which protects instead of the respect which smiles.

Then, with a rapid glance, he, in his turn, analyzed the person of the already celebrated young woman, whose intelligent and expressive features were altogether devoid of beauty; it was the head of an insignificant and frivolous youth, rather than that of a woman, but which surmounted a form of voluptuous luxuriance.

She held in her hand a twig from a pomegranate-tree, from which, from absence of mind, she was biting off the blossoms.

"Is it you, sir," inquired the baroness, "who are Doctor Gilbert?"

"Yes, Madame, my name is Gilbert."

"You are very young, to have acquired so great a reputation, or rather, does not that reputation appertain to your father, or to some relative older than yourself?"

"I do not know any one of the name of Gilbert but myself, Madame. And if indeed there is, as you say, some slight degree of reputation attached to the name, I have a fair right to claim it."

"You made use of the name of the Marquis de Lafayette, in order to obtain this interview with me, sir; and, in fact, the marquis has spoken to us of you, of your inexhaustible knowledge —"

Gilbert bowed.

"A knowledge which is so much the more remarkable and so much the more replete with interest," continued the baroness, "since it appears that you are not a mere ordinary chemist, a practitioner, like so many others, but that you have sounded all the mysteries of the science of life."

"I clearly perceive, Madame, that the Marquis de Lafayette must have told you that I am somewhat of a sorcerer," replied Gilbert, smiling; "and if he has told you so, I know that he has talent enough to prove it to you, had he wished to do so."

"In fact, sir, he has spoken to us of the marvellous cures you often performed, whether on the field of battle, or in the American hospitals, upon patients whose lives were altogether despaired of; you plunged them, the general told us, into a factitious death, which so much resembled death itself, that it was difficult to believe it was not real."

"That factitious death, Madame, is the result of a science almost still unknown, now confided only to the hands of some few adepts, but which will soon become common."

"It is mesmerism you are speaking of, is it not?" asked Madame de Staël with a smile.

"Of mesmerism, yes, it is."

"Did you take lessons of the master himself?"

"Alas! Madame, Mesmer himself was only a scholar. Mesmerism, or rather magnetism, was an ancient science, known to the Egyptians and the Greeks. It was lost in the ocean of the middle ages. Shakespeare divined it in Macbeth. Urbain Grandier found it once more, and died for having found it. But the great master — my master — was the Count de Cagliostro."

"That mountebank!" cried Madame de Staël.

"Madame, Madame, beware of judging as do contemporaries, and not as posterity will judge. To that mountebank I owe my knowledge, and perhaps the world will be indebted to him for its liberty."

"Be it so," replied Madame de Staël, again smiling: "I speak without knowing, — you speak with full knowledge of the subject. It is probable that you are right and that I am wrong. But let us return to you. Why is it that you have so long kept yourself at so great a distance from France? Why have you not returned to take your place, your proper station, among the great men of the age, such as Lavoisier, Cabanis, Condorcet, Bailly, and Louis?"

At this last name Gilbert blushed, though almost imperceptibly.

"I have yet too much to study, Madame, to rank myself all at once among these great masters."

"But you have come at last, though at an unpropitious moment for us; my father, who would, I feel assured, have been happy to be of service to you, has been disgraced, and left here three days ago."

Gilbert smiled.

"Baroness," said he, bowing slightly, "only six days ago I was imprisoned in the Bastille, pursuant to an order from Baron Necker."

Madame de Staël blushed in her turn.

"Really, sir, you have just told me something that greatly surprises me. You in the Bastille!"

"Myself, Madame."

"What had you done to occasion your imprisonment?"

"Those alone who threw me into prison can tell that."

"But you are no longer in prison!"

"No, Madame, because the Bastille no longer exists."

"How can that be? — does the Bastille no longer exist?" cried Madame de Staël, feigning astonishment.

"Did you not hear the firing of cannon?"

"Yes; but cannons are only cannons, that is all."

"Oh, permit me to tell you, Madame, that it is impossible that Madame de Staël, the daughter of Monsieur de Necker, should not know, at this present time, that the Bastille has been taken by the people."

"I assure you, sir," replied the baroness, somewhat confused, "that being unacquainted with any of the events which have taken place since the departure of my father, I no longer occupy my time but in deploring his absence."

"Madame! Madame!" said Gilbert, shaking his head, "the State messengers are so familiar with the road that leads to the château of St. Ouen, that at least one bearer of despatches must have arrived during the four hours that have elapsed since the capitulation of the Bastille."

The baroness saw that it was impossible for her to deny it without positively lying. She abhorred a falsehood; she therefore changed the subject of the conversation.

"And to what lucky event do I owe your visit, sir?" asked she.

"I wished to have the honor of speaking to Monsieur de Necker, Madame."

"But do you know that he is no longer in France?"

"Madame, it appeared to me so extraordinary that Monsieur de Necker should be absent, so impolitic that he should not have watched the course of events — "

"That — "

"That I relied upon you, I must confess, Madame, to tell me where I could find him."

"You will find him at Brussels, sir."

Gilbert fixed his searching gaze upon the baroness.

"Thank you, Madame," said he, bowing; "I shall then set out for Brussels, as I have matters of the highest importance to communicate to him."

Madame de Staël appeared to hesitate, then she rejoined: —

"Fortunately I know you, sir," said she, "and I know you to be a man of serious character. 'T is true, important things might lose a great deal of their value by passing through other lips. But what can there be of importance to my father, after his disgrace — after what has taken place?"

"There is the future, Madame; and perhaps I shall not be altogether without influence over the future. But all these reflections are to no purpose. The most important thing for me, and for him, is, that I should see Monsieur de Necker. Thus, Madame, you say that he is at Brussels?"

"Yes, sir."

"It will take me twenty hours to go there. Do you know what twenty hours are during a revolution, and how many important events may take place during twenty hours? Oh! how imprudent it was for Monsieur de Necker, Madame, to place twenty hours between himself and any event which might take place, — between the hand and the object it desires to reach."

"In truth, sir, you frighten me," said Madame de Staël, "and I begin to think that my father has really been imprudent."

"But what would you have, Madame? Things are thus, are they not? I have, therefore, merely to make you a most humble apology for the trouble that I have given you. Adieu, Madame."

But the baroness stopped him.

"I tell you, sir, that you alarm me," she rejoined; "you owe me an explanation of all this; you must tell me something that will reassure me."

"Alas! Madame," replied Gilbert, "I have so many private interests to watch over at this moment, that it is impossible for me to think of those of others; my life and honor are at stake, as would be the life and honor of Monsieur de Necker if he could take advantage of the words which I shall tell him in the course of twenty hours."

"Sir, allow me to remember something that I have too long forgotten; it is that grave subjects ought not to be discussed in the open air, in a park, within the reach of every ear."

"Madame," said Gilbert, "I am now at your house, and permit me to observe that consequently it is you who have chosen the place where we now are. What do you wish? I am entirely at your command."

"I wish you to do me the favor to finish this conversation in my cabinet."

"Ah! ah!" said Gilbert to himself, "if I did not fear to confuse her, I would ask her whether her cabinet is at Brussels."

But without further question he contented himself with following the baroness, who began to walk quickly toward the château.

The same servant who had admitted Gilbert was found standing in front of the house. Madame de Staël made a sign to him, and opening the doors herself, she led Gilbert into her cabinet, a charming retreat, more masculine, it is true, than feminine, of which the second door and the two windows opened into a small garden, which was not only inaccessible to others, but also beyond the reach of all strange eyes.

When they had gone in, Madame de Staël closed the door, and turning towards Gilbert: —

"Sir, in the name of humanity, I call upon you to tell me the secret which is so important to my father, and which has brought you to St. Ouen."

"Madame," said Gilbert, "if your father could now hear me, if he could but know that I am the man who sent the king the secret memoirs entitled, 'Of the State of Ideas and of Progress,' I am sure the Baron de Necker would immediately appear, and say to me, 'Doctor Gilbert, what do you desire of me? Speak; I am listening.'"

Gilbert had hardly pronounced these words when a secret door which was concealed by a panel painted by Vanloo was noiselessly slid aside, and the Baron de Necker, with a smiling countenance, suddenly appeared, standing at the foot of a small, winding staircase, at the top of which could be perceived the dim rays of a lamp.

Then the Baroness de Staël courtesied to Gilbert, and kissing her father's forehead, left the room by the same staircase which her father had just descended, and having closed the panel, she disappeared.

Necker advanced towards Gilbert, and gave him his hand, saying, —

"Here I am, Monsieur Gilbert; what do you desire of me? Speak, I am listening."

They both seated themselves.

"Monsieur le Baron," said Gilbert, "you have just heard a secret which has revealed all my ideas to you. It was I who, four years ago, sent an essay to the king on the general state of Europe; it is I who, since then, have sent him from the United States the various works he has received on all the questions of conciliation and

internal administration which have been discussed in France."

"Works of which his Majesty," replied Monsieur de Necker, bowing, "has never spoken to me without expressing a deep admiration of them, though at the same time a profound terror at their contents."

"Yes, because they told the truth. Was it not because the truth was then terrible to hear, and, having now become a fact, it is still more terrible to witness?"

"That is unquestionably true, sir," said Necker.

"Did the king send these essays to you for perusal?" asked Gilbert.

"Not all of them, sir; only two: one on the subject of the finances, — and you were of my opinion with a very few exceptions; but I nevertheless felt myself much honored by it."

"But that is not all; there was one in which I predicted all the important events which have taken place."

"Ah!"

"Yes."

"And which of them, sir, I pray?"

"There were two in particular; one was that the king would find himself some day compelled to dismiss you, in consequence of some engagements he had previously entered into."

"Did you predict my disgrace to him?"

"Perfectly."

"That was the first event: what was the second?"

"The taking of the Bastille."

"Did you predict the taking of the Bastille?"

"Monsieur le Baron, the Bastille was more than a royal prison, it was the symbol of tyranny. Liberty has

commenced its career by destroying the symbol; the Revolution will do the rest."

"Have you duly considered the serious nature of the words you have just uttered, sir?"

"Undoubtedly I have."

"And you are not afraid to express such a theory openly?"

"Afraid of what?"

"Afraid lest some misfortune should befall you."

"Monsieur de Necker," said Gilbert, smiling, "after once having got out of the Bastille, a man has nothing more to fear."

"Have you, then, come out of the Bastille?"

"This very day."

"And why were you thrown into the Bastille?"

"I ought to ask you that question."

"Ask me?"

"You, undoubtedly."

"And why should you ask me?"

"Because it was you who caused my imprisonment there."

"I had you thrown into the Bastille?"

"Six days ago; the date, as you see, is not so very remote that you should not be able to recollect it."

"It is impossible."

"Do you recognize your own signature?"

And Gilbert showed the ex-minister the leaf of the jail-book of the Bastille, and the *lettre de cachet* which was annexed to it.

"Yes," said Necker, "that is doubtless the *lettre de cachet*. You know that I signed as few as possible, and that the smallest number possible was still four thousand annually; besides, at the moment of my departure, they made me sign several in blank. Your

warrant of imprisonment, sir, must have been one of the latter."

"Do you mean to imply by this that I must in no way attribute my imprisonment to you?"

"Most certainly, I do."

"But still, Monsieur le Baron," said Gilbert, smiling, "you understand my motives for being so curious; it is absolutely necessary that I should know to whom I am indebted for my captivity. Be good enough, therefore, to tell me."

"Oh! there is nothing easier. I have always taken the precaution never to leave my letters at the ministry, and every evening I brought them back here. Those of this month are in the drawer B of this chiffonnier; let us look for the letter G in the bundle."

Necker opened the drawer, and looked over an enormous file, which might have contained some five or six hundred letters.

"I only keep those letters," said the ex-minister, "which are of such a nature as to cover my responsibility. Every arrest that I order insures me another enemy. I had therefore to guard myself against such a contingency. An omission to do so would surprise me greatly. Let us see — G — G, that is the one. Yes, Gilbert — your arrest was brought about by some one in the queen's household, my dear sir. Ah — ah! — in the queen's household — yes, here is a request for a warrant against a man named Gilbert. Profession not mentioned; black eyes, black hair. The description of your person follows. Travelling from Havre to Paris. That is all. Then the Gilbert mentioned in the warrant must have been you."

"It was myself. Can you trust me with that letter?"

"No; but I can tell you by whom it is signed."

"Please to do so."

"By the Countess de Charny."

"The Countess de Charny," repeated Gilbert. "I do not know her. I have done nothing to displease her."

And he raised his head gently, as if endeavoring to recall to mind the name of the person in question.

"There is, moreover, a small postscript," continued Necker, "without any signature, but written in a hand I know."

Gilbert stooped down and read in the margin of the letter: —

"Do what the Countess de Charny demands immediately."

"It is strange," said Gilbert. "I can readily conceive why the queen should have signed it, for I mentioned both her and the Polignacs in my essays. But Madame de Charny — "

"Do you not know her?"

"It must be an assumed name. Besides, it is not at all to be wondered at that the notabilities of Versailles should be unknown to me. I have been absent from France for fifteen years, during which time I only came back twice; and I returned after my second visit to it, some four years ago. Who is this Countess de Charny?"

"The friend, the bosom companion of the queen; the much beloved wife of the Count de Charny; a woman who is both beautiful and virtuous, — a prodigy, in short."

"Well, then, I do not know this prodigy."

"If such be the case, doctor, be persuaded of this, that you are the victim of some political intrigue. Have you never spoken of Count Cagliostro?"

"Yes."

"Were you acquainted with him?"

"He was my friend. He was even more than my friend; he was my master, my saviour."

"Well, then, either Austria or the Holy See must have demanded your incarceration. You have published some pamphlets, have you not?"

"Alas! yes."

"That is it, precisely. All their petty revenges point towards the queen, like the magnetic needle which points towards the pole, — the iron towards the loadstone. They have been conspiring against you; they have had you followed. The queen has ordered Madame de Charny to sign the letter, in order to prevent any suspicion; and now all the mystery is cleared up."

Gilbert reflected for a moment. This moment of reflection reminded him of the box which had been stolen from Billot's house; and with which neither the queen, nor Austria, nor the Holy See had any connection. This recollection led his mind to consider the matter in its right point of view.

"No," said he, "it is not that; it cannot be that. But it matters not. Let us talk of something else."

"Of what?"

"Of you."

"Of me? What can you have to say of me?"

"Only what you know as well as any one else. It is that before three days have elapsed you will be reinstated in your ministerial capacity; and then you may govern France as despotically as you please."

"Do you think so?" said Necker, smiling.

"And you think so, too, since you are not at Brussels."

"Well then," exclaimed Necker, "what will be the result? For it is the result I wish to come to."

"Here it is. You are beloved by the French; you will soon be adored by them. The queen was already tired of seeing you beloved. The king will grow tired of seeing you adored. They will acquire popularity at your expense, and you will not suffer it. Then you will become unpopular in your turn. The people, my dear Monsieur de Necker, is like a starving lion, which licks only the hand that supplies it with food, be it whose hand it may."

"After that?"

"After that you will again be lost in oblivion."

"I — lost in oblivion?"

"Alas! yes."

"And what will cause me to be forgotten?"

"The events of the times."

"My word of honor for it, you speak like a prophet."

"It is my misfortune to be one to a certain extent."

"Let us hear now what will happen?"

"Oh, it is not difficult to predict what will happen, for that which is to happen is already in embryo in the Assembly. A party will arise that is slumbering at this moment. I am mistaken; it is not slumbering, but it hides itself. This party has for its chief a principle, and its weapon is an idea."

"I understand you; you mean the Orleanist party?"

"No. I should have said of that one that its chief was a man, and its weapon popularity. I speak to you of a party whose name has not even yet been pronounced. Of the republican party."

"Of the republican party? Ah! that is too ridiculous."

"Do you not believe in its existence?"

"A chimera."

"Yes, a chimera, with a mouth of fire that will devour you all."

"Well, then, I shall become a republican. I am one already."

"A republican from Geneva, certainly."

"But it seems to me that a republican is a republican."

"There is your mistake, my good baron. Our republicans do not resemble the republicans of other countries. Our republicans will first have to devour all privileges, then the nobility, and after that the monarchy. You may start with our republicans, but they will reach the goal without you, for you will not desire to follow them so far. No, Monsieur de Necker, you are mistaken; you are not a republican."

"Oh, if you understand it in that sense, no; I love the king."

"And I too," said Gilbert; "and everybody at this moment loves him as we do. If I were to say this to a mind of less calibre than yours, I should be hooted and laughed at; but believe what I tell you, Monsieur de Necker."

"I would readily do so, indeed, if there were any probability of such an event; but —"

"Do you know any of the secret societies?"

"I have heard them much spoken of."

"Do you believe in their existence?"

"I believe in their existence, but I do not believe they are very extensively disseminated."

"Are you affiliated to any one of them?"

"No."

"Do you belong even to a Masonic lodge?"

"No."

"Well, then, Monsieur de Necker, I do."

"Are you affiliated to any of these societies?"

"Yes, to all of them. Beware, Monsieur de Necker; they form an immense net that surrounds every throne.

It is an invisible dagger that threatens every monarchy. We form a brotherhood of about three millions of men, scattered abroad in every land, disseminated throughout all classes of society. We have friends among the people, among the citizens, among the nobility, among princes, among sovereigns themselves. Take care, Monsieur de Necker; the prince with whom you might be irritated is perhaps an affiliated member. The valet who humbles himself in your presence may be an affiliated member. Your life is not yours; your fortune is not your own; your honor even is not yours. All this is directed by an invisible power, which you cannot combat, for you do not know it, and which may crush you because it knows you. Well, these three millions of men, do you see, who have already made the American republic, these three millions of men will try to form a French republic; then they will try to make a European republic."

"But," said Necker, "their republic of the United States does not alarm me much, and I willingly accept such a form of government."

"Yes, but between America and ourselves there is a deep gulf. America is a new country, without prejudices, without aristocratic privileges, without monarchy. It has a fertile soil, productive land, and virgin forests; America, which is situated between a sea which serves as an outlet for its commerce, and an immense solitude which is a source of wealth to its population, while France, — just consider how much it would be necessary to destroy in France before France can resemble America!"

"But, in fine, what do you intend to prove by this?"

"I mean to point out to you the path into which we

are inevitably forced. But I would endeavor to advance into it without causing any shock, by placing the king at the head of the movement."

"As a standard?"

"No, but as a shield."

"A shield!" observed Necker, smiling. "You know but little of the king if you wish to make him play such a part."

"Pardon me, — I know him well. Oh, gracious heaven! I know full well he is a man similar to a thousand others whom I have seen at the head of small districts in America; he is a good man without majesty, incapable of resistance, without originality of mind. But what would you have? Were it only for his sacred title, he would still be a rampart against those men of whom I was speaking to you a short time ago; and however weak the rampart may be, we like it better than no defence at all.

"I remember in our wars with the savage tribes of North America," continued Gilbert, "I remember having passed whole nights behind a clump of bulrushes, while the enemy was on the opposite bank of the river, and firing upon us.

"A bulrush is certainly no great defence. Still, I must frankly acknowledge to you, Monsieur de Necker, that my heart beat more freely behind those large green tubes, which were cut through by the bullets as if they were thread papers, than it did in the open field. Well, then, the king is my rush. It allows me to see the enemy, and it prevents the enemy from seeing me. That is the reason why I am a republican at New York or at Philadelphia, but a royalist in France. There our dictator was named Washington. Here, God knows what he will be named: either dagger or scaffold."

"You seem to view things in colors of blood, Doctor."

"You would see them in the same light as myself, if you had been, as I was, on the Place de Grève to-day."

"Yes, that is true; I was told that a massacre had taken place there."

"There is something magnificent, do you see, in the people; but it is when well disposed. Oh, human tempests!" exclaimed Gilbert, "how much do you surpass in fury all the tempests of the skies!"

Necker became thoughtful.

"Why can I not have you near me, Doctor?" said he; "you would be a useful counsellor in time of need."

"Near you, Monsieur de Necker? I should not be so useful to you, nor so useful to France, as where I wish to go."

"And where do you wish to go?"

"Listen to me, sir; near the throne itself there is a great enemy of the throne; near the king there is a great enemy of the king; it is the queen. Poor woman! who forgets that she is the daughter of Maria Theresa, or rather, who only remembers it in a vain-glorious point of view; she thinks to save the king, and ruins more than the king, for she destroys the monarchy. Well, it is necessary that we who love the king, we who love France, should unite together to neutralize her power, and to annihilate her influence."

"Well, then, do as I said, sir: remain with me, assist me."

"If I were to remain near you, we should have but one sphere of action; you would be I, and I should be you. We must separate our forces, sir, and then they will acquire a double weight."

"And, with all that, what can we accomplish?"

"We may retard the catastrophe, perhaps, but certainly we cannot prevent it, although I can answer for the assistance of a powerful auxiliary, the Marquis de Lafayette."

"Is not Lafayette a republican?"

"As far as a Lafayette can be a republican. If we are absolutely to submit to the level of equality, believe me, we had better choose the level of nobility. I like equality that elevates, and not that which lowers mankind."

"And you can answer for Lafayette?"

"Yes, so long as we shall require nothing of him but honor, courage, and devotedness."

"Well, then, speak; tell me what is it you desire?"

"A letter of introduction to his Majesty, Louis XVI."

"A man of your worth does not need a letter of introduction; he may present himself without it."

"No, it suits me that I should be your creature; it is part of my project to be presented by you."

"And what is your ambition?"

"To become one of the king's physicians in ordinary."

"Oh, there is nothing more easy. But the queen?"

"When I have once seen the king, that will be my own affair."

"But if she should persecute you?"

"Then I will make the king assert his will."

"The king assert his will? You will be more than a man if you accomplish that."

"He who can control the physical part of a man, must be a great simpleton indeed if he does not some day succeed in controlling the mind."

"But do you not think that having been imprisoned in the Bastille is but a sorry recommendation for you, who wish to become the king's physician."

"On the contrary, it is the very best. Have I not

been, according to you, persecuted for the crime of philosophy?"

"I fear such is the case."

"Then the king will vindicate his reputation; the king will become popular by taking as his physician a pupil of Rousseau, a partisan of the new doctrines, — a prisoner who has left the Bastille, in short. The first time you see him, make him duly weigh the advantage of such a course."

"You are always in the right; but when once you are employed by the king, can I rely upon you?"

"Entirely, so long as you shall follow the line of politics which we shall adopt."

"What will you promise me?"

"To warn you of the precise moment when you must retreat."

Necker looked at Gilbert for a moment; then in a more thoughtful tone: —

"Indeed; that is the greatest service which a devoted friend can render to a minister, for it is the last one."

And he seated himself at his table to write to the king.

While he was thus occupied, Gilbert was again examining the letter demanding his arrest; he several times repeated, —

"The Countess de Charny? Who can she be?"

"Here, sir," said Necker, a few moments after, while he presented Gilbert with the letter he had just written.

Gilbert took the letter and read it.

It contained the following lines: —

SIRE, — Your Majesty needs the services of a trustworthy person, with whom you may converse upon your affairs. My last gift, my last service in leaving the king, is the present I make him of Doctor Gilbert.

It will be sufficient for me to tell your Majesty that Doctor Gilbert is not only one of the most skilful physicians living, but also the author of the works entitled "Administrations and Politics," which made so lively an impression upon your mind.

At your Majesty's feet,

BARON DE NECKER.

Necker did not date the letter, and gave it to Doctor Gilbert, closed only with an ordinary seal.

"And now," added he, "I am again at Brussels, am I not?"

"Yes, certainly, and more so than ever. To-morrow morning, at all events, you shall hear from me."

The baron struck against the panel in a peculiar manner. Madame de Staël again appeared; only this time, in addition to her branch of pomegranate, she held one of Doctor Gilbert's pamphlets in her hands.

She showed him the title of it with a sort of flattering coquetry.

Gilbert took leave of Monsieur de Necker, and kissed the hand of the baroness, who accompanied him to the door of the cabinet.

And he returned to his coach, where he found Pitou and Billot sleeping upon the front seat, the coachman sleeping on his box, and the horses sleeping upon their exhausted limbs.

CHAPTER XXII.

KING LOUIS XVI.

THE interview between Gilbert, Madame de Staël, and Monsieur de Necker had lasted about an hour and a half. Gilbert re-entered Paris at a quarter-past nine o'clock, drove straight to the post-house, ordered horses and a post-chaise; and while Billot and Pitou were gone to rest themselves, after their fatigue, in a small hotel in the Rue Thiroux, where Billot generally put up when he came to Paris, Gilbert set off at a gallop on the road to Versailles.

It was late, but that mattered little to Gilbert. To men of his nature, activity is a necessity. Perhaps his journey might be a fruitless one. But he even preferred a useless journey to remaining motionless. For nervous temperaments, uncertainty is a greater torment than the most frightful reality.

He arrived at Versailles at half-past ten; in ordinary times, every one would have been in bed and wrapped in the profoundest slumber; but that night no eye was closed at Versailles. They had felt the counter-shock of the terrible concussion with which Paris was still trembling.

The French Guards, the body-guards, the Swiss, drawn up in platoons and grouped near the openings of all the principal streets, were conversing among themselves, or with those of the citizens whose fidelity to the monarchy inspired them with confidence.

For Versailles has, at all times, been a royalist city. Religious respect for the monarchy, if not for the monarch, is engrafted in the hearts of its inhabitants, as if it were a quality of its soil. Having always lived near kings, and fostered by their bounty, beneath the shade of their wonders, — having always inhaled the intoxicating perfume of the *fleurs-de-lys*, and seen the brilliant gold of their garments, and the smiles upon their august lips, the inhabitants of Versailles, for whom kings have built a city of marble and porphyry, feel almost kings themselves; and even at the present day, even now, when moss is growing round the marble, and grass is springing up between the slabs of the pavement, now that gold has almost disappeared from the wainscoting, and that the shady walks of the parks are more solitary than a graveyard, Versailles must either belie its origin, or must consider itself as a fragment of the fallen monarchy, and no longer feeling the pride of power and wealth, must at least retain the poetical associations of regret, and the sovereign charms of melancholy. Thus, as we have already stated, all Versailles, in the night between the 14th and 15th July, 1789, was confusedly agitated, anxious to ascertain how the King of France would reply to the insult offered to the throne, and the deadly wound inflicted on his power.

By his answer to Monsieur de Dreux Brézé, Mirabeau had struck royalty in the face.

By the taking of the Bastille, the people had struck royalty to the heart.

Still, to narrow-minded and short-sighted persons the question seemed easy of solution. In the eyes of military men in particular, who were accustomed to see nothing more than the triumph or defeat of brute-force in the result of events, it was merely necessary to march upon

Paris. Thirty thousand men and twenty pieces of cannon would soon reduce to a nonentity the conceit and the victorious fury of the Parisians.

Never had monarchy so great a number of advisers, for everybody uttered his opinions loudly and publicly.

The most moderate said : —

"It is a very simple matter."

This form of language, it will be observed, is nearly always applied, with us, to the most difficult circumstances.

"It is a very simple matter," said they. "Let them begin by obtaining from the National Assembly a sanction which it will not refuse. Its attitude has, for some time, been reassuring to every one ; it will not countenance violence committed by the lower classes, any more than abuses perpetrated by the upper.

"The Assembly will plainly declare that insurrection is a crime; that citizens who have representatives to explain their griefs to the king, and a king to do them justice, are wrong in having recourse to arms and in shedding blood.

"Being once armed with this declaration, which could certainly be obtained from the Assembly, the king could not avoid chastising Paris, like a good parent, that is to say, severely.

"And then the tempest would be allayed, and the monarchy would regain the first of its rights. The people would return to their duty, which is obedience, and things would go on in the usual way."

It was thus that the people in general were settling this great question, upon the squares and the Boulevards.

But before the Place d'Armes, and in the vicinity of the barracks, they treated the subject very differently.

There could be seen men altogether unknown in the neighborhood, men with intelligent countenances and

sinister looks, disseminating mysterious advice to all around them, exaggerating the news which was already sufficiently serious, and propagating, almost publicly, the seditious ideas which during two months had agitated Paris and excited the suburbs. Round these men groups were forming, some gloomy and hostile, some excited, composed of people whom these orators were reminding of their misery, their sufferings, the brutal disdain of the monarchy for the privations of the people. An orator said to them: —

"During eight centuries that the people have struggled, what have they obtained? Nothing. No social rights; no political rights. What is their fate? That of the farmer's cow, from whom its calf is led to the shambles, its milk to be sold at the market, its meat to be taken to the slaughter-house, its skin to be dried at the tannery. In short, pressed by want, the monarchy has yielded, it has made an appeal to the States; but now that the States are assembled, what does the monarchy? Since the day of their convocation it weighs heavily upon them. If the National Assembly is formed, it is against the will of the monarchy. Well, then! since our brethren of Paris have just given us such vigorous assistance, let us urge the National Assembly onward. Each step which it takes in the political arena, where the battle has begun, is a victory for us: it is the extension of our field, it is the increase of our fortune, it is the consecration of our rights. Forward! forward, citizens! The Bastille is but the outwork of tyranny! The Bastille is taken; the citadel is before us!"

In remote corners other meetings were formed, and other words pronounced. Those who pronounced them were men evidently belonging to a superior class, who had sought in the costume of the vulgar a disguise with

which their white hands and distinguished accent contrasted strangely.

"People," exclaimed these men, "in truth, you are deceived on both sides! Some ask you to retrace your steps, while others urge you onward. Some speak to you of political rights, of social rights; but are you happier for having been permitted to vote through the medium of your delegates? Are you any the richer since you have been represented? Have you been less hungry, now that the National Assembly makes decrees? No. Leave politics, then, to those who can read. It is not a written phrase or maxim that you need. It is bread, and again bread; it is the well-being of your children, the tranquillity and security of your wives. Who will give you all that? A king, firm in character, young in mind, and of a generous heart. That king is not Louis XVI., — Louis XVI., who is ruled by his wife, the iron-hearted Austrian. It is — search carefully round the throne; search there for him who can render France happy, and whom the queen naturally detests, and that because he throws a shadow over the picture, because he loves the French, and is beloved by them."

Thus did public opinion manifest itself at Versailles; thus was civil war fomented everywhere.

Gilbert observed several of these groups, and then, having perceived the state of the public mind, he walked straight to the palace, which was guarded by numerous military posts, to protect it against whom no one knew.

Notwithstanding all these precautions, Gilbert, without the slightest difficulty, crossed the first courtyard, and reached the vestibule without having been asked by any one where he was going.

When he arrived at the Hall of the Œil-de-Bœuf, he

was stopped by one of the body-guards. Gilbert drew from his pocket the letter of Monsieur de Necker, whose signature he showed.

The guard cast his eyes over it. The instructions he had received were very strict; and as the strictest instructions are precisely those which most need to be interpreted, the guard said to Gilbert: —

"The order, sir, to allow no one to visit the king is positive; but as the case of a person sent by Monsieur de Necker was evidently not foreseen, and as, according to all probability, you are the bearer of important information to his Majesty, go in. I will take the responsibility upon myself."

Gilbert entered.

The king was not in his apartments, but in the council-room. He was just receiving a deputation from the National Guard of Paris, which had come to request the dismissal of the troops, the formation of a guard of citizens, and his presence in the capital.

Louis had listened coldly; then he had replied that the situation of affairs required investigation; and that, moreover, he was about to deliberate on the subject with his council.

And, accordingly, he deliberated.

During this time the deputies were waiting in the gallery; and through the ground-glass windows of the doors they could observe the shadows of the royal councillors and the threatening attitude which they assumed.

By the study of this species of phantasmagoria they could foresee that the answer would be unfavorable.

In fact, the king contented himself with saying that he would appoint some officers for the national militia, and would order the troops at the Champ-de-Mars to fall back.

As to his presence in Paris, he would only show this favor when the rebellious city had completely submitted.

The deputation begged, insisted, and conjured. The king replied that his heart was grieved, but that he could do nothing more.

And satisfied with this momentary triumph and this manifestation of a power which he no longer possessed, the king returned to his apartment.

He there found Gilbert. The guard was standing near him.

"What is wanted of me?" asked the king.

The body-guard approached him, and while he was apologizing to the king for having disobeyed his orders, Gilbert, who for many years had not seen the king, was silently examining the man whom God had given to France as her pilot during the most violent tempest the country had ever experienced.

That stout, short body, in which there was neither elasticity nor majesty; that inexpressive and low-formed brow; that pallid youthfulness contending against premature old age; the unequal struggle between a powerful physical organization, and a mediocre intelligence, to which the haughtiness of rank alone gave a fitful importance, — all these to the physiognomist who had studied with Lavater, to the magnetizer who had read the future with Balsamo, to the philosopher who had dreamed with Jean Jacques, to the traveller, in short, who had passed all the human races in review, — all these implied degeneracy, dwindling, impotence, and ruin.

Gilbert was therefore struck dumb, not from a feeling of respect, but from grief, while contemplating this mournful spectacle.

The king advanced towards him.

"It is you," said he, "who bring me a letter from Monsieur de Necker?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Ah!" cried he, as if he had doubted it; "give it to me quickly."

And he pronounced these words in the tone of a drowning man who cries, "A rope!"

Gilbert presented the letter to the king.

Louis immediately grasped it, read it hurriedly, then, with a gesture which was not altogether wanting in nobleness of manner: —

"Leave us, Monsieur de Varicourt," said he to the body-guard.

Gilbert remained alone with the king. The room was lighted but by a single lamp. It might have been thought that the king had diminished the quantity of light, in order that no one should perceive on his wearied rather than careworn brow the anxious thoughts which crowded there.

"Sir," said he, fixing upon Gilbert a clearer and more penetrating gaze than the latter would have thought him capable of, — "Sir, is it true that you are the author of the memoirs which have so much struck me?"

"Yes, Sire."

"What is your age?"

"Thirty-two years, Sire; but study and misfortune double age. Treat me as if I were an old man."

"Why did you omit so long to present yourself to me?"

"Because, Sire, I did not wish to tell your Majesty aloud what I could write to you more freely and more easily."

Louis XVI. reflected.

"Had you no other reason?" said he, suspiciously.

"No, Sire."

"But still, either I am mistaken, or there were some peculiar circumstances which ought to have convinced you of my kindly feeling towards you."

"Your Majesty intends to speak of that sort of rendezvous which I had the temerity to give the king, when, after my first memoir, I begged him, five years ago, to place a light near his window, at eight o'clock in the evening, to indicate that he had read my work."

"And — ?" said the king, with an air of satisfaction.

"And on the day and at the hour appointed, the light was, in fact, placed where I had asked you to place it."

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards I saw it lifted up and set down again three times."

"And then?"

"After that I read the following words in the 'Gazette:'—

"'He whom the light has called three times may present himself to him who has raised it three times, when he will be compensated.'"

"Those are, in fact, the very words of the advertisement," said the king.

"And there is the advertisement itself," said Gilbert, drawing from his pocket the number of the 'Gazette' in which the advertisement he had just alluded to had been published five years previously.

"Well — very well," said the king. "I have long expected you. You arrive at a moment I had quite ceased to expect you. You are welcome; for you come, like good soldiers, at the moment of battle."

Then, looking once more attentively at Gilbert:—

"Do you know, sir," said he to him, "that it is not an ordinary thing for a king to await the arrival of

a person to whom he has said, 'Come to receive your reward,' and that that person should abstain from coming."

Gilbert smiled.

"Come now, tell me," said Louis XVI., "why did you not come?"

"Because I deserved no reward, Sire."

"For what reason?"

"Born a Frenchman, loving my country, anxious for its prosperity, confounding my individuality with that of thirty millions of men, my fellow-citizens, I labored for myself while laboring for them. A man is not worthy of reward when he labors for his own interest."

"That is a paradox, sir; you had another reason."

Gilbert did not reply.

"Speak, sir; I desire it."

"Perhaps, Sire, you have guessed rightly."

"Is not this it?" asked the king in an anxious tone. "You found the position a very serious one, and you kept yourself in reserve."

"For one still more serious. Yes, Sire, your Majesty has divined the truth."

"I like frankness," said the king, who could not conceal his agitation; for he was of a timid nature, and blushed easily.

"Then," continued Louis XVI., "you predicted the king's fall to him, and you feared to be placed too near the ruins."

"No, Sire, since it is just at the moment that danger is most imminent that I come to face the danger."

"Yes, yes; you have just left Necker, and you speak like him. The danger! — the danger! Without doubt it is dangerous at this moment to approach me. And where is Necker?"

"Quite ready, I believe, to obey the orders of your Majesty."

"So much the better; I shall want him," said the king, with a sigh. "In politics we must not be headstrong. We think to do good, and we do wrong. We even do good, and some capricious event mars our projects; and though the plans laid were in reality good, we are accused of having been mistaken."

The king sighed again. Gilbert came to his assistance.

"Sire," said he, "your Majesty reasons admirably; but what is desirable at the present moment is, to see into the future more clearly than has been done hitherto."

The king raised his head, and his inexpressive eyebrows slightly frowned.

"Sire, forgive me," said Gilbert; "I am a physician. When the danger is imminent, I speak briefly."

"Do you, then, attach much importance to the riot of to-day?"

"Sire, it is not a riot — it is a revolution."

"And you wish me to make terms with rebels and assassins? For, in fine, they have taken the Bastille by force: it is an act of rebellion; they have killed Monsieur de Launay, Monsieur de Losme, and Monsieur de Flesselles: it is murder."

"I wish you to distinguish more correctly, Sire. Those who took the Bastille are heroes; those who assassinated Messieurs de Flesselles, de Losme, and de Launay are murderers."

The king colored slightly, and almost immediately this color disappeared, his lips became pale, and a few drops of perspiration trickled down his forehead.

"You are right, sir. You are a physician indeed, or a surgeon rather, for you cut to the quick. But let us

return to the object of our interview. You are Doctor Gilbert, are you not, — or at least it is with this name that your memoirs are signed?"

"Sire, it does me great honor that your Majesty has so good a memory, although, taking it all in all, I have no great reason to be proud of my name."

"How is that?"

"My name must, indeed, have been pronounced before your Majesty, and that not long ago."

"I do not understand you."

"Six days ago I was arrested and thrown into the Bastille. Now I have heard it said that no arrest of any importance was ever made without the king being aware of the fact."

"You in the Bastille!" said the king, opening his eyes widely.

"Here is the registration of my imprisonment, Sire. Put in prison, as I have the honor to tell your Majesty, six days ago, by order of the king, I came out of it at three o'clock to-day, by the grace of the people."

"To-day?"

"Yes, Sire. Did your Majesty hear the cannon?"

"Most undoubtedly."

"Well, then, the cannon opened the gates for me."

"Ah!" murmured the king, "I would willingly say that I am pleased at this event, had not the cannon of this morning been fired at the Bastille and the monarchy at the same time."

"Oh, Sire, do not make a prison the symbol of a principle: say, on the contrary, Sire, that you rejoice that the Bastille is taken: for henceforward injustice will not be committed in the king's name without his cognizance, — injustice similar to that of which I have just been the victim."

"But surely, sir, your arrest must have had a cause?"

"None that I know of, Sire; I was arrested on my return to France, and imprisoned, that is all."

"Really, sir," said Louis XVI., kindly, "is there not some egotism on your part, in speaking to me thus of yourself, when I so much need to have my own position spoken of?"

"Sire, all I require is, that your Majesty will answer me one single question."

"What is it?"

"Was or was not your Majesty concerned in my arrest?"

"I was not even aware of your return to France."

"I rejoice at this answer, Sire; I shall then be enabled to declare openly that when your Majesty is supposed to do wrong, you are nearly always calumniated; and to those who doubt it, I can cite myself as an example."

The king smiled.

"As a physician," said he, "you pour balm into the wound."

"Oh, Sire, I shall pour in the balm abundantly; and if you desire it I will cure the wound, that I will answer for."

"I most assuredly desire it."

"You must desire it very firmly, Sire."

"I do desire it firmly."

"Before going any farther, Sire," said Gilbert, "will you read that line written in the margin of my jail-book entry?"

"What line?" asked the king in an anxious tone.

Gilbert presented the page to the king. The king read: "'By request of the queen.'"

The king frowned.

"Of the queen!" said he; "can you have incurred her displeasure?"

"Sire, I am certain her Majesty knows me still less than did your Majesty."

"But still, you must have committed some fault; a man is not sent to the Bastille for nothing."

"It would seem that he may be, since I have just come out of it."

"But Monsieur Necker has sent you to me, and the warrant of imprisonment was signed by him."

"It was so undoubtedly."

"Then explain yourself more clearly. Review your past life. See if you do not find some circumstance in it which you had yourself forgotten."

"Review my past life! Yes, Sire; I shall do it, and aloud; do not fear, it will not occupy much time. I have labored without intermission since I attained the age of sixteen: the pupil of Jean Jacques, the companion of Balsamo, the friend of Lafayette and of Washington, I have never had cause to reproach myself, since the day that I left France, for a single fault, nor even an error. When acquired science permitted me to attend the wounded or the sick, I always thought myself responsible to God for every one of my thoughts, and every action. Since God has given me the care of human beings as a surgeon, I have shed blood for the sake of humanity, while ready to give my own to soothe or to save my patient; as a physician, I have always been a consoler, and sometimes a benefactor. Fifteen years have thus passed away. God has blessed my efforts: I have seen return to life the greater part of the afflicted, who have all kissed my hands. Those who have died, have been taken away by the will of God. No, I repeat, Sire, since the day when I left France, and that was fifteen

years ago, I have done nothing with which I can reproach myself."

"You have in America associated with innovators, and your writings have propagated their principles."

"Yes, Sire; and I forgot this claim to the gratitude of kings and men."

The king was silent.

"Sire," continued Gilbert, "now my life is known to you; I have neither offended nor wounded any one, — neither a beggar nor a queen, — and I come to ask your Majesty why I have been punished."

"I shall speak to the queen, Monsieur Gilbert; but do you think the *lettre de cachet* comes directly from the queen?"

"I do not say that, Sire; I even think the queen merely recommended it."

"Ah! you see," cried Louis, quite joyfully.

"Yes; but you are aware, Sire, that what a queen recommends, she commands."

"At whose request was the *lettre de cachet* granted? May I see it?"

"Yes, Sire," said Gilbert. "Look at it."

And he presented him the entry in the jail-book.

"The Countess de Charny!" exclaimed the king. "How, it is she who caused your arrest? But what can you have done to this poor Charny?"

"I did not even know that lady by name this morning, Sire."

Louis passed his hand over his brow.

"Charny," murmured he, "Charny, — sweetness, virtue, chastity itself."

"You will see, Sire," said Gilbert, laughing, "that I was imprisoned in the Bastille at the request of the three theological virtues!"

"Oh, I will clear this up at once!" said the king.

And he pulled a bell.

An usher appeared.

"See if the Countess de Charny is with the queen," said Louis.

"Sire," said the usher, "the countess has this instant crossed the gallery; she is about stepping into her coach."

"Run after her," said Louis, eagerly, "and request her to come to my cabinet on an affair of importance."

Then, turning towards Gilbert:—

"Is that what you desire, sir?" said he.

"Yes, Sire," answered Gilbert, "and I return a thou- said thanks to your Majesty."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE COUNTESS DE CHARNY.

GILBERT, on hearing the order to send for Madame de Charny, had retired into the recess of a window.

As to the king, he was walking up and down in the room called the Œil-de-Bœuf, preoccupied at times with public affairs, at others with the pertinacity of this Gilbert, by whom, in spite of himself, he felt strangely influenced, and at a moment when nothing ought to have interested him but the affairs of Paris.

Suddenly the door of the cabinet was thrown open, the usher announced the Countess de Charny, and Gilbert, through the closed curtains, could perceive a woman, whose flowing and silken robes grazed the half-opened door.

This lady was dressed, according to the fashion of the times, in a déshabille of gray silk, striped with a variety of colors, with a petticoat of the same stuff, and a sort of shawl, which, after being crossed over the chest, was fastened behind her waist, and showed to great advantage the beauties of a full and well-developed bosom. A small bonnet, coquettishly fixed on the summit of a high head-dress, high-heeled shoes, which showed the exquisite shape of a beautiful instep, a small cane twirled by the gloved fingers of a slender and delicate hand, with tapering and perfectly aristocratic fingers: such was the person so anxiously expected by Gilbert.

The king stepped forward to meet her.

"You were just going out, Countess, I was told."

"In truth, Sire," replied the countess, "I was on the point of stepping into my carriage when I received your Majesty's order."

On hearing this firm-toned voice, the ears of Gilbert were suddenly assailed as with a rushing sound. The blood instantly suffused his cheeks, and a thousand shudders appeared to thrill through his whole system.

Despite himself, he made a step from the curtain, behind which he had secreted himself.

"She!" stammered he; "she — Andrée —"

"Madame," continued the king, who, as well as the countess, had not observed the emotion of Gilbert, who was hidden in the shade, "I requested you to visit me, for the purpose of obtaining some information from you."

"I am ready to comply with your Majesty's wishes."

The king leaned in the direction of Gilbert as if to warn him.

The latter, perceiving that the moment to show himself had not yet arrived, gradually withdrew himself again behind the curtain.

"Madame," said the king, "it is now eight or ten days since a warrant of imprisonment was requested of Monsieur de Necker —"

Gilbert, through the almost imperceptible opening between the curtains, fastened his gaze upon Andrée. The young woman was pale, feverish, and anxious, and appeared borne down by the weight of a secret prepossession, for which even she herself could not account.

"You hear me, do you not, Countess?" asked Louis XVI., seeing that Madame de Charny hesitated before answering.

"Yes, Sire."

"Well, do you understand me, and can you answer my question?"

"I am endeavoring to remember," said Andrée.

"Permit me to assist your memory, Countess. The warrant of imprisonment was demanded by you, and the demand was countersigned by the queen."

The countess, instead of answering, appeared to abandon herself more and more to that feverish abstraction which seemed to lead her beyond the limits of real life.

"But answer me, then, Madame," said the king, who began to grow impatient.

"It is true," said she, trembling, "it is true. I wrote the letter, and her Majesty, the queen, countersigned it."

"Then," asked Louis, "tell me the crime which had been committed by the person against whom such a document was required."

"Sire," said Andrée, "I cannot tell you what crime he had committed; but what I can tell you is, that the crime was great."

"Oh, can you not confide that even to me?"

"No, Sire."

"Not to the king?"

"No. I hope your Majesty will forgive me; but I cannot."

"Then you shall tell it to him in person, Madame," said the king; "for what you have refused to King Louis XVI., you cannot refuse to Doctor Gilbert."

"To Doctor Gilbert!" exclaimed Andrée. "Great God! where is he then?"

The king stepped aside to allow Gilbert to advance; the curtains were thrown apart, and the doctor appeared almost as pale as Andrée.

"Here he is, Madame," said he.

At the sight of Gilbert, the countess staggered. Her limbs shook beneath her. She fell backwards, as does a person who is about to faint, and only maintained a standing position with the assistance of an arm-chair, on which she leaned in the sorrowful, motionless, and almost unconscious attitude of Eurydice at the moment when the serpent's venom reaches her heart.

"Madame," said Gilbert, bowing to her with mock politeness, "allow me to repeat the question which has just been put to you by his Majesty."

The lips of Andrée could be seen to move, but no sound issued from them.

"What offence had I committed, Madame, that an order from you should have caused me to be thrown into a loathsome dungeon?"

On hearing this voice, Andrée bounded as if she had felt the tearing asunder of the fibres of her heart.

Then, on a sudden, casting upon Gilbert an icy look, like that of a serpent: —

"Me, sir?" said she. "I do not know you."

But while she pronounced these words, Gilbert, on his side, had looked at her with such intentness, he had loaded the brightness of his gaze with so much invincible audacity, that the countess cast down her eyes, completely overpowered.

"Countess," said the king, in a mild tone of reproach, "see where the abuse of a signature may lead you. Here is a gentleman whom you do not know, and you yourself confess it; a man who is a great practitioner, a profound physician, a man who can be reproached for nothing."

Andrée raised her head, and almost petrified Gilbert by her contemptuous look.

He, however, remained calm and proud.

"I say, then," continued the king, "that having no

cause for complaint against Monsieur Gilbert, by thus persecuting him instead of another, it is on the head of an innocent man that punishment has fallen. Countess, this is wrong."

"Sire," said Andrée.

"Ah!" interrupted the king, who already trembled for fear of disobliging the favorite of his wife, "I know that you are kind-hearted, and that if you have punished some one through hatred, that person must have deserved it; but you see that it will be necessary, in future, to avoid the recurrence of such mistakes."

Then, turning towards Gilbert: —

"You see, Doctor, it is the fault of the times, rather than that of men. We are born in corruption, and we die in it; but we will endeavor at least to ameliorate the condition of posterity, and you will, I trust, assist me in this work, Doctor Gilbert."

And Louis ceased speaking, thinking he had said enough to satisfy both parties.

Poor king! had he pronounced those words before the National Assembly, not only would he have been applauded, but, moreover, he would have seen them reproduced in all the court journals.

But the two unrelenting enemies present at this interview appreciated but little his conciliating philosophy.

"With your Majesty's permission," said Gilbert, "I will request the countess to repeat what she has already stated, namely, that she does not know me."

"Countess," said the king, "will you do what the doctor requests of you?"

"I do not know Doctor Gilbert," repeated Andrée in a firm voice.

"But you know another Gilbert, my namesake, — the Gilbert whose crime has been visited on me."

"Oh," said Andrée, "I know that person, and I consider him an infamous wretch."

"Sire, it would not become me to interrogate the countess," said Gilbert; "but deign to ask her of what that infamous man has been guilty."

"Countess, you cannot refuse acceding to so just a request."

"What he has done?" said Andrée. "Doubtless the queen knew of what crime he had been guilty, since with her own hand she authorized the letter by means of which I applied for his arrest."

"But," said the king, "it is not quite sufficient that the queen should be convinced; it is necessary that I too should be convinced. The queen is the queen, but I am the king."

"Well then, Sire, the Gilbert mentioned in the warrant is a man who, sixteen years ago, committed a most fearful crime."

"Will your Majesty ask the countess how old that man is at the present day?"

The king repeated the question.

"From thirty to thirty-two," said Andrée.

"Sire," rejoined Gilbert, "if the crime was committed sixteen years ago, it was not committed by a man, but by a child; and if, during these sixteen years, the man has deplored the crime committed by the child, does not that man deserve some little leniency?"

"But, sir," asked the king, "you then know the Gilbert in question?"

"I know him, Sire," said Gilbert.

"And has he committed no other fault except this one of his early youth?"

"I do not know that since the day on which he committed — I will not say that fault, Sire, for I am less

indulgent than you — but that crime, I do not know that any one in this world has aught to reproach him with."

"No, unless it is having dipped his pen in poison, and having composed the most odious libels," cried Andrée.

"Sire, please to ask the countess," said Gilbert, "if the real object of the arrest of this Gilbert was not to afford every facility to his enemies, or rather to his enemy, to obtain possession of a certain casket containing certain papers, which might have compromised a great lady, a lady of the court."

Andrée trembled from head to foot.

"Monsieur," faltered she.

"Countess, what is this casket?" asked the king, who had perceived the trembling and the pallor of the countess.

"Ah, Madame," cried Gilbert, feeling that he was gaining the mastery, "no tergiversation, — no subterfuge. There have been misstatements enough on both sides. I am the Gilbert who committed the crime; I am the Gilbert of the libels; I am the Gilbert of the casket. You — you are the great lady, — the lady of the court. I call upon the King to be our judge; accept him, and we will tell to this judge, — to the King — to God, — we will tell all that has occurred between us; and the King shall decide, while we await the judgment of God."

"Say what you will, sir," rejoined the Countess, "but I can say nothing; I do not know you."

"And you know nothing of this casket either?"

The countess convulsively closed her hands and bit her pale lips till they bled.

"No," said she, "I know no more of it than I do of you."

But the effort she made to pronounce these words was

such, that her body trembled as does a statue on its pedestal during an earthquake.

"Madame, beware," said Gilbert. "I am, as you can hardly have forgotten, the pupil of a man called Joseph Balsamo. The power which he possessed over you, he has transmitted to me. For the last time, will you answer the question I put to you: My casket?"

"No," cried the countess, a prey to the most indescribable agitation, and making a movement to rush out of the room; "no, no, no!"

"Well, then," said Gilbert, in his turn becoming pale, and raising his threatening arm; "well then! thou iron nature, thou heart of adamant, bend, burst, and break beneath the irresistible pressure of my will. Wilt thou not speak, Andrée?"

"No, no," cried the countess; "help me Sire, help me!"

"Thou shalt speak," cried Gilbert; "and no one, were he the King, or even God himself, can withdraw thee from my power. Thou shalt speak, then; thou shalt reveal thy whole soul to the witness of this solemn scene; and all that is contained in the recesses of thy conscience, — all that which God alone can read in the depths of the deepest souls, you shall know, Sire, from the lips of her who refuses to reveal them. Sleep, Countess de Charny, sleep and speak. I will it!"

Hardly were the words pronounced, when the Countess stopped short in the midst of a suppressed cry, stretched forth her arms, and seeking support for her trembling limbs, fell, as if imploring a refuge, into the arms of the king, who, trembling himself, seated her upon an arm-chair.

"Oh!" said Louis XVI., "I have heard of things of this nature, but I never before witnessed anything to

equal it. Is it not to a magnetic sleep that she has just succumbed, sir?"

"Yes, Sire; take the hand of the countess, and ask her why she caused me to be arrested," said Gilbert, as if the right to command belonged to him alone.

Louis XVI., quite thunderstruck by this marvellous scene, took two steps backwards to convince himself that he was not himself asleep, and that what was taking place before him was not a dream; then, like a mathematician who is interested in some new solution, he approached nearer to the countess, whose hand he took in his.

"Let us see, Countess," said he; "it was then you who caused the arrest of Doctor Gilbert?"

Still, although asleep, the countess made one last effort, snatched her hand from that of the king, and gathering up all her strength:—

"No," cried she, "I will not speak."

The king looked at Gilbert, as if to ask him which of the two would overcome the other, — his will or that of Andrée.

Gilbert smiled.

"You will not speak?" said he.

And, his eyes fixed upon the sleeping Andrée, he advanced a step towards the arm-chair.

Andrée shuddered.

"Will you not speak?" added he, taking a second step, which diminished the distance that separated him from the countess.

Every muscle of Andrée's frame became rigid in a supreme effort of resistance.

"Ah, you will not, speak, then?" said he, taking a third stride, which placed him at the side of Andrée, over whose head he placed his outstretched hand; "ah, you will not speak?"

Andrée was writhing in the most fearful convulsions.

"But take care! take care!" cried Louis XVI., "you will kill her!"

"Fear nothing, Sire; it is with the soul alone that I have to contend; the soul is struggling, but it will yield."

Then, lowering his hand: —

"Speak!" said he.

Andrée extended her arms, and made an effort to breathe, as if she had been under the pressure of a pneumatic machine.

"Speak!" repeated Gilbert, lowering his hand still more.

All the muscles of the young woman's body seemed about to burst. A fringe of froth appeared upon her lips, and a commencement of epilepsy convulsed her from head to foot.

"Doctor! Doctor!" said the king, "take care!"

But he, without noticing the king, lowered his hand a third time, and touching the top of the countess's head with the palm of that hand: —

"Speak!" said he; "it is my will."

Andrée, on feeling the touch of that hand, heaved a sigh, her arms fell motionless to her side, her head, which had been thrown backwards, fell forward upon her breast, and a copious flood of tears oozed through her closed eyelids.

"My God! my God! my God!" faltered she.

"Invoke the Lord, — be it so; he who operates in the name of God does not fear God."

"Oh!" said the countess, "how I hate you!"

"Abhor me, if you will, but speak!"

"Sire, Sire," exclaimed Andrée, "tell him that he consumes me, that he devours me, that he kills me!"

"Speak!" said Gilbert.

Then he made a sign to the king that he might interrogate her.

"So that, Countess," said the king, again taking her hand, "he whom you wished to arrest, and whom you caused to be arrested, was really the doctor himself?"

"Yes."

"And there was no mistake, no misunderstanding?"

"None."

"And the casket?" said the king.

"Well," articulated the countess slowly, "could I allow that casket to remain in his possession?"

Gilbert and the king exchanged glances.

"And did you take it from him?" said Louis XVI.

"I had it taken from him."

"Oh! oh! tell me how that was managed, Countess," said the king, forgetful of all ceremony, and kneeling down before Andrée. "You had it taken?"

"Yes."

"When, and by what means?"

"I ascertained that this Gilbert, who during sixteen years has already made two voyages to France, was about to make a third one, and this last time with the intention of remaining here."

"But the casket?" asked the king.

"I ascertained by means of the lieutenant of police, Monsieur de Crosne, that during one of his journeys he had bought some lands in the neighborhood of Villers-Cotterets, that the farmer who tenanted his lands enjoyed his whole confidence; I suspected that the casket might be left at his residence."

"What made you think so?"

"I went to see Mesmer. I made him put me to sleep, and I saw the casket while in that state."

"It was —"

"In a large linen wardrobe on the ground-floor, hidden under some linen."

"This is wonderful!" said the king. "After that tell me what took place."

"I returned to the house of Monsieur de Crosne, who having been recommended to do so by the queen, gave me one of his most skilful agents."

"What was the name of this agent?" asked Gilbert.

Andrée shuddered as if a hot iron had touched her.

"I ask you his name?" repeated Gilbert.

Andrée endeavored to resist.

"His name; I will know it!" said the doctor.

"Wolfsfoot," she replied.

"After that?" asked the king.

"Well, then, yesterday morning this man got possession of the casket. That is all."

"No, it is not all," said Gilbert. "You must now tell the king where the casket is at this moment."

"Oh," said Louis XVI., "you ask too much of her."

"No, Sire."

"But by this Wolfsfoot, by means of Monsieur de Crosne, one might ascertain —"

"Oh, we shall know everything quicker, and much better, through the Countess!"

Andrée, by a convulsive movement, the object of which was doubtless to prevent the words from escaping her lips, clinched her teeth with such violence as almost to break them.

The king pointed out this nervous convulsion to the doctor.

Gilbert smiled.

He touched with his thumb and forefinger the lower part of the face of Andrée, whose muscles were relaxed at the same moment.

"In the first place, Countess, tell the king clearly that this casket belonged to Doctor Gilbert."

"Yes, yes, it belongs to him," said the sleeping woman, angrily.

"And where is it at this moment?" asked Gilbert. "Make haste! the king has not time to wait."

Andrée hesitated for a moment.

"At Wolfsfoot's house," said she.

Gilbert observed the hesitation, although it was scarcely perceptible.

"You are telling a falsehood!" said he, "or rather, you are endeavoring to tell one. Where is the casket? I insist on knowing."

"At my house at Versailles," said Andrée, bursting into tears, with a nervous trembling which shook her whole frame, "at my house, where Wolfsfoot is waiting for me, as we had previously agreed to meet at eleven o'clock to-night."

Midnight was heard to strike.

"Is he still waiting there?"

"Yes."

"In which room is he?"

"They have just shown him into the drawing-room."

"What place does he occupy in the drawing-room?"

"He is standing, and leaning against the chimney-piece."

"And the casket?"

"It is on the table before him. Oh!"

"What is the matter?"

"Let us hasten to get him out of the house. Monsieur de Charny, who was not to return till to-morrow, will come back to-night, on account of the events that have taken place. I see him; he is at Sèvres. Make him go away, so that the count may not find him in the house."

"Your Majesty hears that; in what part of Versailles does Madame de Charny reside?"

"Where do you reside, Countess?"

"On the Boulevard de la Reine, Sire."

"Very well."

"Sire, your Majesty has heard everything. That casket belongs to me. Does the king order it to be returned to me?"

"Immediately, sir."

And the king, having drawn a screen before Madame de Charny, which prevented her from being seen, called the officer on duty, and gave him an order in a low voice.

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"At my house at Versailles," said Andrée, bursting into tears, with a nervous trembling which shook her whole frame, "at my house, where Wolfsfoot is waiting for me, as we had previously agreed to meet at eleven o'clock to-night."

Midnight was heard to strike.

"Is he still waiting there?"

"Yes."

"In which room is he?"

"They have just shown him into the drawing-room."

"What place does he occupy in the drawing-room?"

"He is standing, and leaning against the chimney-piece."

"And the casket?"

"It is on the table before him. Oh!"

"What is the matter?"

"Let us hasten to get him out of the house. Monsieur de Charny, who was not to return till to-morrow, will come back to-night, on account of the events that have taken place. I see him; he is at Sèvres. Make him go away, so that the count may not find him in the house."

"Your Majesty hears that; in what part of Versailles does Madame de Charny reside?"

"Where do you reside, Countess?"

"On the Boulevard de la Reine, Sire."

"Very well."

"Sire, your Majesty has heard everything. That casket belongs to me. Does the king order it to be returned to me?"

"Immediately, sir."

And the king, having drawn a screen before Madame de Charny, which prevented her from being seen, called the officer on duty, and gave him an order in a low voice.

"In the first place, Countess, tell the king clearly that this casket belonged to Doctor Gilbert."

"Yes, yes, it belongs to him," said the sleeping woman, angrily.

"And where is it at this moment?" asked Gilbert. "Make haste! the king has not time to wait."

Andrée hesitated for a moment.

"At Wolfsfoot's house," said she.

Gilbert observed the hesitation, although it was scarcely perceptible.

"You are telling a falsehood!" said he, "or rather, you are endeavoring to tell one. Where is the casket? I insist on knowing."

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CHAPTER XXIV.

ROYAL PHILOSOPHY.

A STRANGE preoccupation for a king whose subjects were undermining his throne. The inquisitiveness of the erudite man applied to a physical phenomenon, while the most important political phenomenon was taking place that France had ever known, — that is to say, the transformation of a monarchy into a democracy. This sight, we say, of a king forgetting himself during the most terrible period of a tempest, would certainly have caused the great minds of the time to smile, bent, as they had been during three months, on the solution of their problem.

While riot was raging in all its fury without, Louis, forgetting the terrible events of the day, — the taking of the Bastille, the assassination of Flesselles, De Launay, and De Losme, the disposition of the National Assembly to revolt against the king, — Louis was concentrating his mind on this examination of a theory; and the revelations of this strange scene absorbed him no less than the most vital interests of his government.

And thus, as soon as he had given the order which we have mentioned to the captain of his guards, he returned to Gilbert, who was removing from the countess the excess of fluid with which he had charged her, in order that her slumber might be more tranquil than under the effects of this convulsive somnambulism.

For an instant the respiration of the countess became calm and easy as that of a sleeping child. Then Gilbert, with a single motion of his hand, reopened her eyes, and put her into a state of ecstasy.

It was then that one could see the extraordinary beauty of Andrée, in all its splendor. Being completely freed from all earthly agitations, the blood, which had for an instant rushed to her face, and which momentarily had colored her cheeks, redescended to her heart, whose pulsations had recovered their natural state. Her face had again become pale, but of that beautiful pallor of the women of the East; her eyes, opened rather more than usual, were raised towards heaven, and left the pupils floating, as it were, in the pearl-like whiteness of their eyeballs; the nose, slightly expanded, appeared to inhale a purer atmosphere; and her lips, which had preserved all their vermilion, although her cheeks had lost a little of theirs, were slightly separated, and discovered a row of pearls, of which the sweet moistness increased the brilliancy.

The head was gently thrown backwards with an inexpressible grace, almost angelic. It might have been said that this fixed look, increasing its scope of vision by its intensity, penetrated to the foot of the throne of God.

The king gazed at her as if dazzled. Gilbert turned away his head and sighed. He could not resist the desire to give Andrée this degree of superhuman beauty; and now, like Pygmalion — more unhappy even than Pygmalion, for he knew the insensibility of the beautiful statue — he trembled at the sight of his own production.

He made a sign without even turning his head towards Andrée, and her eyes closed instantly.

The king desired Gilbert to explain to him that mar-

vellous state, in which the soul separates itself from the body, and soars, free, happy, and divine, above all terrestrial miseries.

Gilbert, like all men of truly superior genius, could pronounce the words so much dreaded by mediocrity, "I do not know." He confessed his ignorance to the king. He had produced a phenomenon which he could not explain. The fact itself existed, but the explanation of the fact could not be given.

"Doctor," said the king, on hearing this avowal of Gilbert, "this is another of those secrets which Nature reserves for the learned men of another generation, and which will be studied thoroughly, like so many other mysteries which were thought insoluble. We call them mysteries; our fathers would have called them sorcery or witchcraft."

"Yes, Sire," answered Gilbert, smiling, "and I should have had the honor to be burned on the Place de Grève, for the greater glory of a religion which was not understood, by wise men without learning, and priests devoid of faith."

"And under whom did you study this science?" rejoined the king; "was it with Mesmer?"

"Oh, Sire!" said Gilbert, smiling, "I had seen the most astonishing phenomena of the science ten years before the name of Mesmer was pronounced in France."

"Tell me now; this Mesmer, who has revolutionized all France, was he, in your opinion, a charlatan? It seems to me that you operate much more simply than he. I have heard his experiments spoken of, and also those of Deslon and Puységur. You know all that has been said on the subject, whether idle stories or positive truths."

"I have carefully observed all these discussions, Sire."

"Well, then, what do you think of the famous vat or tub?"

"I hope your Majesty will excuse me if I answer doubtingly to all you ask me with regard to the magnetic art. Magnetism has not yet become an art."

"Ah!"

"But it assuredly is a power, a terrific power, since it annihilates the will, since it isolates the soul from the body, and places the body of the somnambulist in the power of the magnetizer, while the soul does not retain the power, nor even the desire, to defend itself. As for me, Sire, I have seen strange phenomena produced. I have produced many myself. Well, I nevertheless still doubt."

"How! you still doubt? You perform miracles, and yet you are in doubt?"

"No, I do not doubt — I do not doubt. At this moment even, I have a proof before my eyes of an extraordinary and incomprehensible power. But when that proof has disappeared, when I am at home alone in my library, face to face with all that human science has written during three thousand years; when science says no; when the mind says no; when reason says no, I doubt."

"And did your master also doubt, Doctor?"

"Perhaps he did, but he was less sincere than I. He did not express his doubt."

"Was it Deslon? Was it Puységur?"

"No, Sire, no. My master was a man far superior to all the men you have named. I have seen him perform the most marvellous things, especially with regard to wounds. No science was unknown to him. He had impregnated his mind with Egyptian theories. He had penetrated the arcana of ancient Assyrian civilization.

He was a profound scholar, a formidable philosopher, having a great knowledge of human life, combined with a persevering will."

"Have I ever known him?" asked the king.

Gilbert hesitated a moment.

"I ask you whether I ever knew him?"

"Yes, Sire."

"And you call him —"

"Sire," said Gilbert, "to pronounce that name before the king would perhaps render me liable to his displeasure. Now, especially at this moment, when the majority of Frenchmen are contemning all royal authority, I would not throw a shade on the respect we all owe your Majesty."

"Name that man boldly, Doctor Gilbert; and be persuaded that I too have my philosophy, — a philosophy of sufficiently good material to enable me to smile at all the insults of the present and all the threats of the future."

Gilbert still continued to hesitate.

The king approached him.

"Sir," said he to Gilbert, laughing, "call him Satan, if you will; I shall still find a shield to protect me from him, — the one which your dogmatizers do not possess, — one that they never will possess, one which I alone perhaps in this century possess, and bear without feeling shame, — religion."

"Your Majesty believes as Saint Louis did. It is true," said Gilbert.

"And in that lies all my strength, I confess, Doctor. I like science; I adore the results of materialism; I am a mathematician, as you well know; you know that the sum total of an addition or an algebraical formula fills my heart with joy; but when I meet people who carry algebra to atheism, I have in reserve my profound, inexhaustible,

and eternal faith — a faith which places me a degree above and a degree below them, — above them in good, and beneath them in evil. You see, then, Doctor, that I am a man to whom everything may be said, a king who can hear anything."

"Sire," said Gilbert, with a sort of admiration, "I thank your Majesty for what you have just said to me; for you have almost honored me with the confidence of a friend."

"Oh, I wish," the timid Louis hastened to exclaim, "I wish all Europe could hear me speak thus. If Frenchmen could read in my heart all the energy of feeling, the tenderness which it contains, I think they would oppose me less."

The last portion of the king's sentence, which showed that the king was irritated by the attack the royal prerogative had been subjected to, lowered Louis XVI. in the estimation of Gilbert.

He hastened to say, without attempting to spare the king's feelings, —

"Sire, since you insist upon it, my master was the Count de Cagliostro."

"Oh!" cried Louis, coloring, "that empiric!"

"That empiric! — yes, Sire! Your Majesty is doubtless aware that the word you have just pronounced is one of the noblest used in science. *Empiric* means *the man who experiments:* the practitioner, the profound thinker, — the man, in short, who is incessantly investigating, — does all that God permits men to do that is glorious and beautiful. Let but a man *experiment* during his whole life, and his life will be well occupied."

"Ah, sir, this Cagliostro whom you defend was a great enemy of kings."

Gilbert recollected the affair of the necklace.

"Is it not rather the enemy of queens your Majesty intended to say?"

Louis shuddered at this sharp home-thrust.

"Yes," said he, "he conducted himself, in all the affair of Prince Louis de Rohan, in a manner which was more than equivocal."

"Sire, in that, as in other circumstances, Cagliostro carried out the human mission: he made his own researches. In science, in morals, in politics, there is neither good nor evil; there are only stated phenomena or accomplished facts. Nevertheless, I will not defend him, Sire. I repeat, the man may often have merited blame; perhaps some day this very blame may be considered as praise: posterity reconsiders the judgments of men. But I did not study under the man, Sire, but under the philosopher, under the great physician."

"Well, well," said the king, who still felt the double wound his pride and heart had received, "well; but we are forgetting the Countess de Charny, and perhaps she is suffering."

"I will wake her up, Sire, if your Majesty desires it; but I had wished that the casket might arrive here during her sleep."

"Why?"

"To spare her a too harsh lesson."

"Here is somebody coming at this moment," said the king. "Wait."

In fact, the king's order had been punctually obeyed. The casket found at the hotel of the Countess de Charny, in the possession of the agent Wolfsfoot, was brought into the royal cabinet, under the very eyes of the Countess, who did not see it.

The king made a sign of satisfaction to the officer who brought the casket. The officer then left the room.

"Well!" said Louis XVI.

"Well, then, Sire, that is, in fact, the very casket which had been taken away from me."

"Open it," said the king.

"Sire, I am willing to do so, if your Majesty desires it; but I have only to forewarn your Majesty of one thing."

"What is that?"

"Sire, as I told your Majesty, this box contains only papers which are easily read, and might be taken, and on which depends the honor of a woman."

"And that woman is the countess?"

"Yes, Sire. That honor will not be endangered while this matter is confined to the knowledge of your Majesty. Open it, Sire," said Gilbert, approaching the casket, and presenting the key of it to the king.

"Sir," replied Louis XVI. coldly, "take away this box; it belongs to you."

"Thank you, Sire, but what are we to do with the countess?"

"Oh, do not, above all, wake her up here. I wish to avoid all recriminations and painful scenes."

"Sire," said Gilbert, "the countess will only awake in the place where you wish her to be carried."

"Well, let her be taken to the queen's apartment, then."

Louis rang the bell. An officer entered the room.

"Captain," said he, "the Countess de Charny has just fainted here, on hearing the news from Paris. Have her taken to the queen's room."

"How long will it take to carry her there?" asked Gilbert of the king.

"About ten minutes," replied the latter.

Gilbert laid his hand on the countess.

"You will awake in three quarters of an hour," said he.

Two soldiers entered, — the order having been given by the officer, — who carried her away in an arm-chair.

"Now, Monsieur Gilbert, what more do you desire?" asked the king.

"Sire, I desire a favor which would draw me nearer to your Majesty, and procure me at the same time an opportunity to be useful to you."

The king endeavored to divine what he could mean.

"Explain yourself," said he.

"I should like to be one of the physicians in ordinary to the king," replied Gilbert; "I should be in the way of no one; it is a post of honor, but rather a confidential than a brilliant one."

"Granted," said the king. "Adieu, Monsieur Gilbert. Ah! by the bye, a thousand compliments to Necker. Adieu."

Then, as he was leaving the room: —

"My supper!" cried Louis, whom no event, however important, could induce to forget his supper.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN THE QUEEN'S APARTMENTS.

While the king was learning to oppose the revolution philosophically, by going through a course of occult sciences, the queen who was a much more substantial and profound philosopher, had gathered around her in her large cabinet all those who were called her faithful adherents, doubtless because there had been no opportunity afforded to any one of them either to prove or to try his fidelity.

In the queen's circle, also, the events of that terrible day had been related in all their details.

She had even been the first to be informed of them, for, knowing her to be undaunted, they had not feared to inform her of the danger.

Around the queen were assembled generals, courtiers, priests, and ladies. Near the doors and behind the tapestries which hung before them might be seen groups of young officers, full of courage and ardor, who saw in all revolts a long desired opportunity to evince their prowess in presence of the fair sex, as in a tournament.

All of these, whether intimately connected with the court, or devoted servants of the monarchy, had listened with attention to the news from Paris, which had been related by Monsieur de Lambesq, who, having been present during those events, had hastened to Versailles with his regiment, still covered with the sand of the

Tuileries, in order to state the real position of affairs to the affrighted courtiers, and thus afford them consolation; for many of them, although the misfortune was sufficiently serious, had greatly exaggerated it in their apprehension.

The queen was seated at a table. It was no longer the gentle and lovely bride, the guardian angel of France, whom we saw appear at the opening of this cycle, crossing the northern frontier, an olive-branch in her hand. It was no longer even that gracious and beautiful princess whom we saw one evening entering with the Princess de Lamballe into the mysterious dwelling of Mesmer, and seating herself, laughing and incredulous, near the symbolical vat, of which she had come to ask a revelation of the future.

No! it was the haughty and resolute queen, with frowning brow and scornful lip; it was a woman whose heart had allowed a portion of its love to escape from it, to harbor, instead of that sweet and vivifying element, the first drops of gall, which by constantly filtering into it was finally to reach her blood.

It was, in short, the woman represented by the third portrait in the gallery of Versailles, that is to say, no longer Marie Antoinette, no longer the Queen of France, but the woman who was now designated only by the name of the Austrian.

Behind her, in the shade, lay a motionless young woman, her head reclining on the cushion of a sofa, and her hand upon her forehead.

This was Madame de Polignac.

Perceiving Monsieur de Lambesq, the queen made one of those gestures indicative of unbounded joy, which mean, "At last we shall know all."

Monsieur de Lambesq bowed, with a sign that asked

pardon at the same time for his soiled boots, his dusty coat, and his sword, which, having been bent in his fall, could not be forced into its scabbard.

"Well, Monsieur de Lambesq," said the queen, "have you just arrived from Paris?"

"Yes, your Majesty."

"What are the people doing?"

"They are killing and burning."

"Through maddening rage or hatred?"

"No; from sheer ferocity."

The queen reflected, as if she had felt disposed to be of his opinion with regard to the people. Then, shaking her head:—

"No, prince," said she, "the people are not ferocious; at least, not without a reason. Do not conceal anything from me. Is it madness?—is it hatred?"

"Well, I think it is hatred carried to madness, Madame."

"Hatred of whom? Ah! I see you are hesitating again, Prince. Take care; if you relate events in that manner, instead of applying to you as I do, I shall send one of my outriders to Paris; he will require one hour to go there, one to acquire information, one to return; and in the course of three hours this man will tell me everything that has happened as accurately and as simply as one of Homer's heralds."

Monsieur de Dreux Brézé stepped forward, with a smile upon his lips.

"But, Madame," said he, "of what consequence to you is the hatred of the people? That can in no way concern you. The people may hate all, excepting you."

The queen did not even rebuke this piece of flattery.

"Come, come, Prince," said she to Monsieur de Lambesq, "speak out."

"Well, then, Madame, it is true the people are influenced by hatred."

"Hatred of me?"

"Of everything that rules."

"Well said! — that is the truth! I feel it," exclaimed the queen, resolutely.

"I am a soldier, your Majesty," said the prince.

"Well, well! speak to us then as a soldier. Let us see what must be done."

"Nothing, Madame."

"How — nothing?" cried the queen, taking advantage of the murmurs occasioned by these words among the wearers of embroidered coats and golden-sheathed swords of her company; "nothing! You, a Prince of Lorraine, — you can speak thus to the Queen of France at a moment when the people, according to your own confession, are killing and burning, and you can coolly say there is nothing to be done!"

A second murmur, but this time of approbation, followed the words of Marie Antoinette.

She turned round, fixed her gaze on all the circle which environed her, and among all those fiery eyes sought those which darted forth the brightest flames, as if she could read a greater proof of fidelity in them.

"Nothing!" continued the prince; "but allow the Parisian to become calm — and he will become so — for he is only warlike when he is exasperated. Why give him the honors of a struggle, and risk the chances of a battle? Let us keep quiet, and in three days there will no longer be a question of a commotion in Paris."

"But the Bastille, sir?"

"The Bastille! Its doors will be closed, and those who took it will be taken, that is all."

Some laughter was heard among the before silent group.

The queen continued, —

"Take care, Prince; you are now reassuring me too much." And thoughtfully, her chin resting on the palm of her hand, she advanced towards Madame de Polignac, who, pale and sad, seemed absorbed in thought.

The countess had listened to all the news with visible fear; she only smiled when the queen stopped opposite to her and smiled; although this smile was pale and colorless as a fading flower.

"Well, Countess," said the queen, "what do you say to all this?"

"Alas! nothing," she replied.

"How, nothing!"

"No."

And she shook her head with an indescribable expression of despair.

"Come, come," said the queen in a very low voice, and stooping to the ear of the countess, "our friend Diana is terrified."

Then she said aloud, —

"But where is Madame de Charny, the intrepid woman? We need her assistance to reassure us, I think."

"The countess was about to go out," said Madame de Misery, "when she was summoned to the king's apartments."

"Ah! the king's," absently answered Marie Antoinette.

And only then did the queen perceive the strange silence which pervaded all around her.

The truth was, these wonderful and incredible events, accounts of which had successively reached Versailles like repeated shocks, had prostrated the firmest hearts, perhaps more by astonishment than fear.

The queen understood that it was necessary to revive all these drooping spirits.

"Can no one advise me?" said she. "Be it so; I will advise myself."

They all drew nearer to Marie Antoinette.

"The people," said she, "are not bad at heart, they are only misled. They hate us because we are unknown to them; let us approach them more nearly."

"To punish them, then," said a voice, "for they have doubted their masters, and that is a crime."

The queen looked in the direction from which the voice proceeded, and recognized Monsieur de Besenval.

"Oh, it is you, Monsieur le Baron," said she; "do you come to give us your good counsel?"

"The advice is already given," said Besenval, bowing.

"Be it so," said the queen; "the king will punish only as a tender father."

"Who loves well chastises well," said the baron.

Then turning towards Monsieur de Lambesq:—

"Are you not of my opinion, Prince? The people have committed several murders— "

"Which they unfortunately call retaliation," said a sweet, low voice, at the sound of which the queen turned in her seat.

"You are right, princess; but it is precisely in that that their error consists, my dear Lamballe; we shall be indulgent."

"But," replied the Princess, in her mild manner, "before asking whether we must punish, I think we ought to ask whether we can conquer."

A general cry burst forth from those who were present, a cry of protestation against the truth which had just been spoken by those noble lips.

"Conquer! and where are the Swiss?" said one.

"And the Germans?" said another.

"And the body-guards?" said a third.

"Can doubts be entertained about the army and the nobility?" exclaimed a young man wearing the uniform of a lieutenant in the Hussars of Bercheny. "Have we then deserved such a reproach? Do but consider, Madame, that no later than to-morrow, if he chose, the king could assemble forty thousand men, throw these forty thousand men into Paris, and destroy the city. Remember that forty thousand faithful troops are worth half a million of revolted Parisians."

The young man who had just spoken these words had without doubt a good many other similar reasons to advance; but he stopped short on seeing the eyes of the queen fixed upon him. He had spoken from the centre of a group of officers, and his zeal had carried him further than was consistent with etiquette and his rank.

He checked himself, accordingly, as we have already said, feeling quite ashamed at the impression his words had made.

But it was too late; the queen had already been struck with his enthusiasm.

"You understand the present condition of affairs, sir?" said she, kindly.

"Yes, your Majesty," said the young man, blushing; "I was at the Champs Elysées."

"Then, do not fear to speak; come nearer, sir."

The young man stepped forward, blushing, from the group which opened to let him pass, and advanced towards the queen.

At the same moment the Prince de Lambesq and Monsieur de Besenval retired a step or two, as if they considered it beneath their dignity to attend this sort of council.

The queen did not pay, or did not appear to pay, any attention to this movement.

"You say, then, sir, that the king has forty thousand men?" asked she.

"Yes, your Majesty."

"In the environs of Paris?"

"At St. Denis, at St. Mandé, at Montmartre, and at Grenelle."

"Give me some details, sir, — some details," exclaimed the queen.

"Madame, the Prince de Lambesq and Monsieur de Besenval can give you them with infinitely more accuracy than myself."

"Go on, sir. It pleases me to hear these details from your lips. Under whose orders are these forty thousand men?"

"In the first place, under the orders of Monsieur de Besenval and Monsieur de Lambesq; then under those of the Prince de Condé, of Monsieur de Narbonne-Fritzlar, and Monsieur de Salkenaym."

"Is this true, Prince?" asked the queen, turning towards Monsieur de Lambesq.

"Yes, your Majesty," answered the prince, bowing.

"On the heights of Montmartre," said the young man, "there is a complete park of artillery; in six hours the whole quarter of the town within the range of Montmartre could be laid in ashes. Let Montmartre give the signal to open fire; let it be answered by Vincennes; let ten thousand men debouch by the Champs Elysées, ten thousand more by the Barrière d'Enfer, ten thousand more by the Rue St. Martin, ten thousand more by the Bastille; make Paris hear our cannonading from the four cardinal points, and she cannot hold her ground for twenty-four hours."

"Ah! here is a man who at all events explains his views frankly; here is at least a clear and regular plan. What do you think of it, Monsieur de Lambesq?"

"I think," answered the prince, disdainfully, "that the lieutenant of hussars is a perfect general."

"He is, at least," said the queen, who saw the young officer turn pale with anger, "he is, at least, a soldier who does not despair."

"I thank you, Madame," said the young man, bowing. "I do not know what your Majesty's decision will be, but I beg you to consider me among those who are ready to die for you; and in so doing, I should only do that, I beg your Majesty to believe, which forty thousand soldiers are ready to do, as well as all our chiefs."

And having said these words, the young man saluted courteously the prince, who had almost insulted him.

This act of courtesy struck the queen still more than the protestations of fidelity which had preceded it.

"What is your name, sir?" asked she of the young officer.

"I am the Baron de Charny, Madame," replied he, bowing.

"De Charny!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette, blushing in spite of herself; "are you then a relative of the Count de Charny?"

"I am his brother, Madame."

And the young man bowed gracefully, even lower than he had done before.

"I ought," said the queen, recovering from her confusion, and casting a firm look around her, "I ought to have recognized you, on hearing your first words, as one of my most faithful servants. Thank you, Baron. How is it that I now see you at court for the first time?"

"Madame, my elder brother, who is taking the place

of my father, has ordered me to remain with the regiment, and during the seven years that I have had the honor of serving in the army of the king, I have only twice been at Versailles."

The queen looked for a considerable time at the young man's face.

"You resemble your brother," said she. "I shall reprimand him for having so long omitted to present you, and left you to present yourself at court."

And the queen turned in the direction of her friend the countess, who during all this scene had remained motionless and mute upon the sofa.

But it was not thus with the remainder of those present. The officers, electrified by the reception the queen had given to the young man, were exaggerating to the utmost among themselves their enthusiasm for the royal cause, and from every group expressions burst forth, evincing a heroism capable of subjugating the whole of France.

Marie Antoinette made the most of these manifestations, which evidently flattered her secret wishes.

She preferred to struggle rather than to submit, to die rather than to yield. With this view, as soon as the first news had reached her from Paris, she had determined upon a stubborn resistance to the rebellious spirit which threatened to swallow up all the prerogatives of French society.

If there is a blind and senseless degree of strength, it is that stimulated by figures and vain hopes.

A figure, followed by an agglomeration of zeros, will soon exceed all the resources of the universe.

The same may be said of the plans of a conspirator or a despot. On enthusiasm, which itself is based on imperceptible hope, gigantic conceptions are built, which

are dissipated before the first breath of wind, in less time than was required to condense them into a mist.

After hearing these few words pronounced by the Baron de Charny, after the enthusiastic hurrahs of the by-standers, Marie Antoinette could almost imagine herself at the head of a powerful army; she could hear the rolling of her harmless artillery, and she rejoiced at the fear which they would doubtless occasion among the Parisians, and had already gained a victory which she thought decisive.

Around her, men and women, beaming with youth, with confidence and love, were reckoning the number of those brilliant hussars, those heavy dragoons, those terrible Swiss, those well-equipped artillerymen, and laughed at the vulgar pikes and their coarse wooden handles, little thinking that on the points of these vile weapons were to be borne the noblest heads of France.

"As for me," murmured the Princess de Lamballe, "I am more afraid of a pike than of a gun."

"Because it is much uglier, my dear Thérèse," replied the queen, smiling. "But, at all events, compose yourself. Our Parisian pikemen are not a match for the famous Swiss pikemen of Morat; and the Swiss of the present day have something more than pikes; they have good muskets, with which they take good aim, thank Heaven!"

"Oh, as to that, I will answer for it!" said Monsieur de Besenval.

The queen turned round once more towards Madame de Polignac to see if all these assurances had restored her wonted tranquillity; but the countess appeared still paler and more trembling than before.

The queen, whose extreme tenderness of feeling often caused her to sacrifice her royal dignity for the sake of

this friend, in vain seemed to solicit her to look more cheerful.

The young woman still continued gloomy, and appeared absorbed in the saddest thoughts. But this despondency only served to increase the queen's sorrow. The enthusiasm among the young officers maintained itself at the same pitch, and all of them, with the exception of the superior officers, were gathered round the Baron de Charny, and drawing up their plans for battle.

In the midst of this febrile excitement the king entered alone, unaccompanied by an usher, and with a smile upon his lips.

The queen, still greatly excited by the warlike emotions which she had aroused, rushed forward to meet him.

At the sight of the king all conversation had ceased, and was followed by the most perfect silence; every one expected a kingly word, — one of those words which electrify and subjugate.

When clouds are sufficiently loaded with electricity, the least disturbance, as is well known, is sufficient to produce a flash.

To the eyes of the courtiers, the king and queen, advancing to meet each other, appeared like two electric bodies, from which the thunder must proceed.

They listened, and trembled, and eagerly waited to catch the first words which were to proceed from the royal lips.

"Madame," said Louis XVI., "amid all these events, they have forgotten to serve up my supper in my own apartment; be so kind as to have it brought me here."

"Here?" exclaimed the queen, with an air of stupefaction.

"If you will permit it."

"But — Sire — "

"You were conversing, it is true; but while at supper I shall converse also."

The mere word "supper" had chilled the enthusiasm of every one present. But on hearing the king's last words, — "at supper I shall converse also," the young queen herself could hardly help thinking that so much calmness concealed some small heroism. The king doubtless thought by his tranquillity to overcome all the terror occasioned by the events that had taken place. This must certainly be his design.

The daughter of Marie Thérèse could not conceive that at so critical a moment the son of Saint Louis could still remain subject to the material wants of ordinary life.

Marie Antoinette was mistaken; the king was hungry, that was all.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HOW THE KING SUPPED ON THE 14TH OF JULY, 1789.

On a word from Marie Antoinette, the king's supper was served on a small table in the queen's own cabinet.

But the contrary of what the princess had hoped soon happened. Louis XVI. ordered every one to be silent, but it was only that he might not be disturbed while at supper.

While Marie Antoinette was endeavoring to revive enthusiasm, the king was devouring a Périgord pie.

The officers did not think this gastronomical performance worthy of a descendant of Saint Louis, and formed themselves into small groups, whose observations were not perhaps as respectful as circumstances ought to have demanded.

The queen blushed, and her impatience betrayed itself in all her movements. Her delicate, aristocratic, and nervous nature could not comprehend this domination of matter over mind.

She drew nearer to the king, with a view to bring those nearer to the table who had retired to a more distant part of the room.

"Sire," said she, "have you no orders to give?"

"Ah! ah!" said the king, his mouth full, "what orders, Madame? Let us see; will you be our Egeria in this difficult moment?"

And while saying these words he bravely attacked a partridge stuffed with truffles.

"Sire," said the queen, "Numa was a pacific king. Now it is generally thought that what we need at present is a warlike king; and if you are going to take antiquity for your model, as your Majesty cannot become a Tarquin, you must be a Romulus."

The king smiled with a tranquillity which almost seemed holy.

"Are these gentlemen warlike also?" asked he.

And he turned towards the group of officers, and his eyes being animated by the cheering influence of his meal, appeared to all present to sparkle with courage.

"Yes, Sire," they all cried with one voice, "war! we only ask for war!"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said the king, "you do me in truth the greatest pleasure, by proving to me that when occasion may require it I may rely upon you. But I have for the moment not only a council, but also a stomach; the former will advise me what I ought to do, the second advises me to do what I am now doing."

And he laughed loudly, and handed his plate, full of fragments, to the officer in waiting, in exchange for a clean one.

A murmur of stupefaction and of rage passed like a shudder through the group of gentlemen, who only required a signal from the king to shed their last drop of blood.

The queen turned round and stamped her foot.

The Prince de Lambesq immediately came to her.

"You see, Madame," said he, "his Majesty no doubt thinks, as I do, that it is better to wait. It is prudence — and although it is not one of mine, unfortunately, prudence is a necessary virtue in the times we live in."

"Yes, sir, yes; it is a very necessary virtue," said the queen, biting her lips till they bled.

With a death-like sadness she reclined against the chimney-piece, her eye lost in darkness, and her soul overwhelmed by despair.

The singular contrast between the disposition of the king and that of the queen struck every one with astonishment. The queen could hardly restrain her tears, while the king continued his supper with the proverbial appetite of the Bourbon family.

The room gradually became empty; the various groups melted away as does the snow in a garden before the rays of the sun, — the snow, beneath which the black and desolate earth soon makes its appearance here and there.

The queen, seeing this warlike group, upon which she relied so much, gradually disappear, imagined that all her power was vanishing; as in former times, the breath of the Lord had melted those vast armies of Assyrians or Amalekites, which one single night sufficed to swallow up in its darkness.

She was aroused from this species of torpor by the sweet voice of the Countess Jules, who approached her with Madame Diana de Polignac, her sister-in-law.

At the sound of this voice, the sweet future, with its flowers and palm-leaves, returned to the mind of this haughty woman. A sincere and devoted friend was to her of more value than ten kingdoms.

"Oh, thou, thou!" murmured she, clasping the Countess Jules in her arms; "I have then one friend left."

And the tears, which for so long a time had been restrained, burst forth from her eyelids, trickled down her cheeks, and inundated her bosom; but instead of being bitter, these tears were sweet, — instead of oppressing her, they disburdened her heart.

They both remained silent for a few moments, during which the queen continued to hold the countess in her arms.

It was the duchess who first broke this silence, while still holding her sister-in-law by the hand.

"Madame," said she, with a voice so timid that she almost appeared ashamed, "I do not think your Majesty will disapprove the project which I am about to submit to your notice."

"What project?" asked the queen attentively; "speak, Duchess, speak?"

And while preparing to listen to the Duchess Diana, the queen leaned upon the shoulder of her favorite, the countess.

"Madame," continued the duchess, "the opinion which I am about to pronounce comes from a person whose authority will not be doubted by your Majesty; it comes from her Royal Highness, Madame Adelaide, the queen's aunt."

"What a singular preamble, dear Duchess," said the queen, gayly, "come, let us hear this opinion."

"Madame, circumstances are disheartening; the favors which our family enjoy from your Majesty have been much exaggerated; calumny stains the august friendship which you deign to grant us in exchange for our respectful devotion."

"Well, then, Duchess," said the queen, with a commencement of astonishment, "do you not think I have evinced sufficient courage? Have I not valiantly sustained my friends against public opinion, against the court, against the people, against the king himself?"

"Oh, Madame, certainly! and your Majesty has so nobly sustained your friends, that you have opposed your

breast to every blow, so that to-day when the danger has become great, terrible even, the friends so nobly defended by your Majesty would be cowardly and unfaithful servants, if they did not prove themselves grateful to their queen."

"Ah, this is well, this is beautiful!" said Marie Antoinette, with enthusiasm, embracing the countess, whom she still pressed against her bosom, while holding the hand of Madame de Polignac in hers.

But both of them turned pale, instead of proudly raising their heads, after they had been thus caressed by their sovereign.

Madame Jules de Polignac made a movement to disengage herself from the arms of the queen; but the latter still pressed her to her heart, despite her efforts to disengage herself.

"But," stammered Madame Diana de Polignac, "your Majesty does not perhaps well understand what we have the honor to make known to you, in order to enable you to ward off the blows which threaten your throne, your person, perhaps, on account of the very friendship with which you honor us. There is a painful means, a bitter sacrifice to our hearts, but we must endure it; necessity commands it."

At these words it was the queen's turn to become pale, for she no longer perceived courageous and faithful friendship, but fear, beneath this exordium, and under the veil of this reserve.

"Let us see," said she; "speak, speak, Duchess; what is this sacrifice?"

"Oh, the sacrifice is entirely on our side, Madame!" replied the latter. "We are, God knows for what reason, execrated in France; by disencumbering your throne, we shall restore to it all the splendor, all the warmth of the

popular love, a love either extinguished or intercepted by our presence."

"You would leave me!" cried the queen, vehemently. "Who has said that? who has asked for that?"

And she cast a despairing look on the Countess Jules de Polignac, gently pushing her from her; the latter held down her head in great confusion.

"Not I," said the Countess Jules; "I, on the contrary, ask but to remain."

But these words were uttered in such a tone that they implied, "Order me to leave you, Madame, and I will leave you."

O holy friendship, thou sacred chain which can link together the hearts of even a sovereign and her subject in indissoluble bonds! O holy friendship, thou engenderest more heroism than even love or ambition, those two noble maladies of the human heart! But thou canst not brook deceit. The queen at once shattered to atoms the adored altar she had raised to thee in her heart; she required but a look, one only look, to reveal to her that which during ten years she had not perceived, she had not even surmised, — coldness and interested calculation, excusable, justifiable, legitimate perhaps; but what can excuse, justify, or legitimize, in the eyes of one who still fondly loves, the abandonment of the one who has ceased to love?

Marie Antoinette's only revenge for the pain which was thus inflicted on her, was the icy coldness with which she gazed upon her friend.

"Ah, Duchess Diana! this, then, is your opinion?" cried she, compressing with her feverish hand the agitated pulsation of her heart.

"Alas! Madame," answered the latter, "it is not my

choice, it is not my will which dictates to me what I am to do: it is the law of destiny!"

"Yes, Duchess," said Marie Antoinette. And turning to the Countess Jules: "And you, Countess: what say you to this?"

The countess replied by a burning tear, as if from a pang of remorse; but she had exhausted all her strength in the effort she had made.

"Well," said the queen, "well, it is gratifying to my feelings to see how much I am beloved. Thank you, my dear Countess; yes, you incur great danger here; the anger of the people no longer knows any bounds; yes, you are all in the right, and I alone was foolish. You ask to remain, — that is pure devotedness; but I cannot accept such a sacrifice."

The Countess Jules raised her beautiful eyes and looked at the queen. But the queen, instead of reading the devotedness of a friend in them, could only perceive the weakness of the woman.

"Thus, Duchess," replied the queen, "*you* are resolved to leave me." And she emphasized the word "you."

"Yes, your Majesty."

"Doubtless for some one of your estates — a distant — a very distant one?"

"Madame, in going away, in leaving you, it would be as painful to travel fifty leagues as one hundred and fifty."

"But do you, then, intend to go abroad?"

"Alas, yes, Madame!"

A suppressed sigh tore the very depths of the queen's heart, but it did not escape her lips.

"And where are you going?"

"To reside on the banks of the Rhine, Madame."

"Well, you speak German, Duchess," said the queen,

with a look of indescribable sadness, "and it was I who taught it you. The friendship of your queen will at least have been useful to you to that extent, and I rejoice at it."

Then, turning to the Countess Jules: —

"I do not wish to dismiss you, my dear Countess," said she. "You desire to remain here, and I deeply appreciate that desire. But I — I, who fear for you — I insist on your departure; I order you to leave me."

And having said these words, she suddenly stopped, overcome by emotions which, in spite of her heroism, she would perhaps not have had the power to control, had not she heard at that moment the voice of the king who had taken no part whatever in what we have just been relating.

The king was at his dessert.

"Madame," said the king, "there is somebody in your apartment; they are seeking you."

"But, Sire," exclaimed the queen, throwing aside every other feeling but that of royal dignity, "in the first place, you have orders to give! Only three persons remain here; but they are those with whom you have to deal: Monsieur de Lambesq, Monsieur de Besenval, and Monsieur de Broglie. Give your orders, Sire; give your orders."

The king raised his heavy eyes and appeared to hesitate.

"What do you think of all this, Monsieur de Broglie?" said he.

"Sire," replied the old marshal, "if you withdraw your army from the sight of the Parisians, it will be said that it was beaten by them. If you leave it in their presence, your army must beat them."

"Well said!" exclaimed the queen, grasping the marshal's hand.

"Well said!" cried Monsieur de Besenval.

The Prince de Lambesq was the only person present who shook his head.

"Well! and after that?" said the king.

"Command: march!" cried the old marshal.

"Yes — march!" cried the queen.

"Well, then, since you all wish it, march!" said the king.

At that moment a note was handed to the queen; its contents were as follows:—

"In the name of Heaven, Madame, no rashness! I await an audience of your Majesty."

"His writing!" murmured the queen.

Then, turning round, she said in a low tone to the woman who had brought the note:—

"Is Monsieur de Charny in my room?"

"He has just arrived, completely covered with dust, and I even think with blood," answered the confidant.

"One moment, gentlemen!" exclaimed the queen, to Monsieur de Besenval and Monsieur de Broglie; "wait for me here; I shall return!"

And she passed into her own apartment in great haste.

The king did not even move his head.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OLIVIER DE CHARNY.

On entering her dressing-room, the queen found the person there who had written the note brought by her waiting-woman.

He was a man thirty-five years of age, of lofty stature, with a countenance which indicated strength and resolution; his grayish-blue eye, sharp and piercing as that of the eagle, his straight nose, his prominent chin, gave a martial character to his physiognomy, which was enhanced by the elegance with which he wore the uniform of a lieutenant in the body-guards.

His hands were still trembling under his torn and ruffled cambric cuffs.

His sword had been bent, and could hardly be replaced in the scabbard.

On the arrival of the queen, he was pacing hurriedly up and down the dressing-room, absorbed by a thousand feverish and agitated thoughts.

Marie Antoinette advanced straight towards him.

"Monsieur de Charny!" she exclaimed, "Monsieur de Charny, you here?"

And seeing that the person whom she thus addressed bowed respectfully according to etiquette, she made a sign to her waiting-woman, who withdrew and closed the doors.

The queen scarcely waited for the door to be closed, when, seizing the hand of Monsieur de Charny with vehemence, —

"Count," cried she, "why are you here?"

"Because I considered it my duty to come, Madame," said the count.

"No; your duty was to fly Versailles; it was to do what we had agreed, — to obey me; it is, in fact, to do as all my friends are doing who fear to share my fate. Your duty is to sacrifice nothing to my destiny; your duty is to flee far from me!"

"To flee from you?" said he.

"Yes; to flee from me."

"And who, then, flies from you, Madame?"

"Those who are prudent."

"I think myself very prudent, Madame, and that is why I now come to Versailles."

"And from where do you come?"

"From Paris."

"From revolted Paris?"

"From boiling, intoxicated, and ensanguined Paris."

The queen covered her face with her hands.

"Oh," said she, "no one, not even you, will then come to bring me good news."

"Madame, in the present circumstances, ask your messengers to tell you but one thing, — the truth."

"And is it the truth you have just told me?"

"I always tell you the truth, Madame."

"You have an honest soul, sir, and a stout heart."

"I am a faithful subject, Madame, that is all."

"Well, then, spare me for the moment, my friend; do not tell me a single word. You have arrived at a moment when my heart is breaking. My friends, to-day, for the first time overwhelm me with that truth which you have always told me. Oh, it is this truth, Count, which it was impossible for them to withhold from me any longer. It bursts forth everywhere: in the heavens which are red;

in the air, which is filled with sinister noises; in the faces of the courtiers, who are pale and serious. No, no, Count; for the first time in your life, tell me not the truth."

The count looked at the queen with amazement.

"Yes, yes," said she; "you who know me to be courageous, you are astonished, are you not? Oh, you are not yet at the end of your astonishment!"

Monsieur de Charny allowed an inquiring gesture to escape him.

"You will see by-and-by," said the queen, with a nervous laugh.

"Does your Majesty suffer?" asked the count.

"No, no, sir. Come and sit down near me, and not a word more about those dreadful politics. Try to make me forget them."

The count obeyed with a sad smile. Marie Antoinette placed her hand upon his forehead.

"Your forehead burns," said she.

"Yes, I have a volcano in my head."

"Your hand is icy cold."

And she pressed the count's hand between both hers.

"My heart is affected with a deathlike coldness," said he.

"Poor Olivier! I had told you so. Let us forget it. I am no longer queen; I am no longer threatened; I am no longer hated. No, I am no longer a queen. I am a woman, that is all. What is the whole universe to me? One heart that loves me would suffice me."

The count fell on his knees before the queen, and kissed her feet with the respect the Egyptians had for the goddess Isis.

"Oh, Count, my only friend!" said the queen, trying to raise him up, "do you know what the Duchess Diana is about to do?"

"She is going to emigrate," answered Charny, without hesitating.

"He has guessed the truth!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette. "He has guessed it. Alas! was it then possible to guess it?"

"Oh, certainly, Madame," answered the count; "one can imagine anything at such a moment as this."

"But you and your friends," exclaimed the queen, "why do you not emigrate, if you consider it so natural a step?"

"In the first place, Madame, I do not emigrate because I am profoundly devoted to your Majesty, and because I have promised, not to you, but to myself, that I will not quit you for a single instant during the impending storm. My brothers will not emigrate, because my conduct will be the model on which they will regulate theirs. In fine, Madame de Charny will not emigrate, because she loves your Majesty sincerely; at least, so I believe."

"Yes, Andrée has a very noble heart," said the queen, with perceptible coldness.

"That is the reason why she will not leave Versailles," answered De Charny.

"Then I shall always have you near me," said the queen, in the same icy tone, which she varied so as to express either her jealousy or her disdain.

"Your Majesty has done me the honor to make me lieutenant of the guards," said the Count de Charny; "my post is at Versailles. I should not have left my post if your Majesty had not intrusted me with the care of the Tuileries. 'It is a necessary exile,' said the queen to me, and I accepted that exile. Now, in all this, your Majesty well knows the Countess de Charny has neither reproved the step, nor was she consulted with regard to it."

"It is true," replied the queen, in the same freezing tone.

"To-day," continued the count, with intrepidity, "I think my post is no longer at the Tuileries, but at Versailles. Well, may it not displease the queen, I have violated my orders, thus selecting the service I prefer; and here I am. Whether Madame de Charny be alarmed or not at the complexion of events, whether it be her desire to emigrate or not, I will remain near the queen, unless, indeed, the queen breaks my sword; in which case, having no longer the right to fight and to die for her on the floor of Versailles, I shall still have that of sacrificing it on its threshold, on the pavement."

The young man pronounced these simple words so valiantly and so loyally, which emanated so evidently from the depths of his heart, that the queen appeared suddenly to lose her haughtiness, a retreat behind which she had just concealed feelings more human than royal.

"Count," said she, "never utter that word again. Do not say that you would die for me, for in truth I know that you would do as you say."

"Oh, on the contrary, I shall always say it!" exclaimed Monsieur de Charny. "I shall say it to every one, and in every place. I shall say it, and I shall do it, because the time has come, I fear, when all who have been attached to the kings of this earth must die."

"Count! Count!— what is it gives you this fatal forewarning?"

"Alas! Madame," replied De Charny, shaking his head, "and I too, during that fatal American war, I too was affected like the rest with that fever of independence which pervaded all society. I too wished to take an active part in the emancipation of the slaves, as it was customary to say in those days; and I was initiated into

the secrets of masonry. I became affiliated with a secret society, with the Lafayettes and the Lameths. Do you know what the object of this society was, Madame? The destruction of thrones. Do you know what it had for its motto? Three letters, — L. P. D."

"And what did these letters signify?"

"*Lilia pedibus destrue!* — Trample the lilies underfoot!"

"Then, what did you do?"

"I withdrew with honor. But for one who withdrew from the society, there were twenty who applied to be admitted into it. Well, then, what is happening to-day, Madame, is the prologue to the grand drama which has been preparing in silence and in darkness for twenty years. At the head of the men who are stimulating Paris to resistance, who govern the Hôtel de Ville, who occupy the Palais-Royal, and who took the Bastille, I recognized the countenances of my former affiliated brethren. Do not deceive yourself, Madame; all the events which have just taken place are not the results of chance; they are outbreaks which had been planned for years."

"Oh, you think so! — you think so, my friend!" exclaimed the queen, bursting into tears.

"Do not weep, Madame, but endeavor to comprehend the present crisis," said the count.

"You wish me to comprehend it!" continued Marie Antoinette. "I, the queen, — I, who was born the sovereign of twenty-five millions of men, — you wish me to understand how these twenty-five millions of subjects, born to obey me, should revolt and murder my friends! No, — that I shall never comprehend."

"And yet it is absolutely necessary for you to understand it, Madame; for the moment this obedience becomes a burden to these subjects, to these men born to

obey you, you become their enemy; and until they have the strength to devour you, to do which they are sharpening their famished teeth, they will devour your friends, still more detested than you are."

"And perhaps you will next tell me that they are right, most sage philosopher," exclaimed the queen, imperiously, her eyes dilated, and her nostrils quivering with anger.

"Alas! yes, Madame, they are right," said the count, in his gentle and affectionate voice; "for when I drive along the Boulevards, with my beautiful English horses, my coat glittering with gold, and my attendants bedecked with more silver than would be necessary to feed three families, your people, that is to say, those twenty-five millions of starving men, ask themselves of what use I am to them, — I, who am only a man like themselves."

"You serve them with this, Marquis," exclaimed the queen, seizing the hilt of the count's sword; "you serve them with the sword that your father wielded so heroically at Fontenoy, your grandfather at Steinkirk, your great-grandfather at Lens and at Rocroi, your ancestors at Ivry, at Marignan, and at Agincourt. The nobility serves the French nation by waging war. By war, the nobility has earned, at the price of its blood, the gold which decks its garments, the silver which covers its liveries. Do not, therefore, ask yourself, Olivier, how you serve the people, you who wield in your turn, and bravely too, the sword which has descended to you from your forefathers."

"Madame! — Madame!" said the count, shaking his head, "do not speak so much of the blood of the nobility: the people, too, have blood in their veins; go and see it running in streams on the Place de la Bastille; go and count their dead, stretched out on the crimsoned

pavement, and consider that their hearts, which now no longer beat, throbbed with a feeling as noble as that of a knight, on the day when your cannon were thundering against them; on the day when, seizing a new weapon in their unskilful hands, they sang in the midst of grape-shot, — a thing which even our bravest grenadiers do not always. Ah! Madame, my sovereign, look not on me, I entreat you, with that frowning eye. What is a grenadier? It is a gilt blue coat, covering the heart of which I was speaking to you a moment since. Of what importance is it to the bullet which pierces and kills, that the heart be covered with blue cloth or with a linen rag? Of what importance is it to the heart which is pierced through, whether the cuirass which protected it was cloth or canvas? The time is come to think of all that, Madame. You have no longer twenty-five millions of slaves in France; you have no longer twenty-five millions of subjects; you have no longer even twenty-five millions of men. You have twenty-five millions of soldiers."

"Who will fight against me, Count?"

"Yes, against you; for they are fighting for liberty, and you stand between them and liberty."

A long silence followed the words of the count. The queen was the first to break it.

"In fine," said she, "you have told me this truth, which I had begged you not to tell me."

"Alas! Madame," replied De Charny, "under whatever form my devotion may conceal it, under whatever veil my respect disguises it, in spite of me, in spite of yourself, examine it, listen to it, think of it. The truth is there, Madame, is there forever, and you can no longer banish it from your mind, whatever may be your efforts to the contrary. Sleep! — sleep, to forget it, and it will

haunt your pillow, will become the phantom of your dreams, a reality at your awakening."

"Oh, Count," said the queen, proudly, "I know a sleep which it cannot disturb!"

"As for that sleep, Madame, I fear it no more than does your Majesty, and perhaps I desire it quite as much."

"Oh," exclaimed the queen, in despair, "according to you, it is, then, our sole refuge?"

"Yes; but let us do nothing rashly, Madame. Let us go no faster than our enemies, and we shall go straight to that sleep by the fatigue which we shall have to endure during so many stormy days."

And a new silence, still more gloomy than the first, weighed down the spirits of the two speakers.

They were seated, he near her, and she near him. They touched each other, and yet between them there was an immense abyss, for their minds viewed the future in a different light.

The queen was the first to return to the subject of their conversation, but indirectly. She looked fixedly at the count. Then: —

"Let us see, sir," said she. "One word as to ourselves, and you will tell me all — all — all. You understand me?"

"I am ready to answer you, Madame."

"Can you swear to me that you came here only for my sake?"

"Oh, do you doubt it?"

"Will you swear to me that Madame de Charny had not written to you?"

"She?"

"Listen to me. I know that she was going out. I know that she had some plan in her mind. Swear to

me, Count, that it was not on her account that you returned!"

At this moment a knock, or rather a scratch, at the door was heard.

"Come in," said the queen.

The waiting-woman again appeared.

"Madame," said she, "the king has just finished his supper."

The count looked at Marie Antoinette with astonishment.

"Well," said she, shrugging her shoulders, "what is there astonishing in that? Must not the king take his supper?"

Olivier frowned.

"Tell the king," replied the queen, without at all disturbing herself, "that I am just receiving news from Paris, and that I shall communicate it to him when I have received it.

Then, turning towards Charny:—

"Go on," said she; "now that the king has supped, it is but natural that he should digest his food."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OLIVIER DE CHARNY.

This interruption had only caused a momentary suspension in the conversation, but had changed in nothing the two-fold sentiment of jealousy which animated the queen at this moment, — jealousy of love as a woman, jealousy of power as a queen.

Hence it resulted that the conversation, which seemed exhausted during its first period, had, on the contrary, only been entered upon, and was about to be revived more sharply than ever; as in a battle, where, after the cessation of the first fire, which had commenced the action at a few points, the fire which decides the victory soon becomes general all along the line.

The count, moreover, as things had arrived at this point, seemed as anxious as the queen to come to an explanation; for which reason, the door being closed again, he was the first to resume the conversation.

"You asked me if it was for Madame de Charny that I had come back," said he. "Has your Majesty then forgotten that engagements were entered into between us, and that I am a man of honor?"

"Yes," said the queen, holding down her head, "yes, we have made engagements; yes, you are a man of honor; yes, you have sworn to sacrifice yourself to my happiness, and it is that oath which most tortures me, for in sacrificing yourself to my happiness, you immolate at the same time a beautiful woman and a noble character, — another crime!"

"Oh, Madame, now you are exaggerating the accusation! I only wish you to confess that I have kept my word as a gentleman."

"It is true; I am insensate; forgive me —"

"Do not call a crime that which originated in chance and necessity. We have both deplored this marriage, which alone could shield the honor of the queen. As for this marriage, there only remains for me to endure it, as I have done for many years."

"Yes!" exclaimed the queen. "But do you think that I do not perceive your grief, that I do not understand your sorrow, which evince themselves in the shape of the highest respect? Do you think that I do not see all this?"

"Do me the favor, Madame," said the count, bowing, "to communicate to me what you see, in order that if I have not suffered enough myself, and made others suffer enough, I may double the amount of suffering for myself, and for all those who surround me, as I feel certain of ever falling short of what I owe you."

The queen held out her hand to the count. The words of the young man had an irresistible power, like everything that emanates from a sincere and impassioned heart.

"Command me, then, Madame," rejoined he; "I entreat you, do not fear to lay your commands upon me."

"Oh, yes, yes! I know it well. I am wrong; yes, forgive me; yes, it is true. But if you have anywhere some hidden idol, to whom you offer up mysterious incense, — if for you there is in some corner of the world an adored woman — oh! I no longer dare to pronounce that word, it strikes me with terror; and I fear lest the syllables which compose it should strike the air and vibrate in my ear, — well, then, if such a woman does

exist, concealed from every one, do not forget that you have publicly, in the eyes of others as in your own, a young and beautiful wife, whom you surround with care and attentions, — a wife who leans upon your arm, and who, while leaning on your arm, leans at the same time on your heart."

Olivier knit his brow, and the delicate lines of his face assumed for a moment a severe aspect.

"What do you ask, Madame?" said he; "do I separate myself from the Countess de Charny? You remain silent; is that the reason, then? Well, then, I am ready to obey this order, even; but you know that she is alone in the world — she is an orphan. Her father, the Baron de Taverney, died last year, like a worthy knight of the olden time, who wishes not to see that which is about to take place in ours. Her brother — you know that her brother, Maison-Rouge, makes his appearance once a year, at most — comes to embrace his sister, to pay his respects to your Majesty, and then goes away, without any one knowing what becomes of him."

"Yes, I know all that."

"Consider, Madame, that this Countess de Charny, were God to remove me from this world, could resume her maiden name, and the purest angel in heaven could not detect in her dreams, in her thoughts, a single unholy word or thought."

"Oh, yes, yes," said the queen. "I know that your Andrée is an angel upon earth; I know that she deserves to be loved. That is the reason why I think she has a brilliant future before her, while mine is hopeless! Oh, no, no! Come, Count, I beg of you, say not another word; I no longer speak to you as a queen — forgive me, I forget myself; but what would you have? there is in my soul a voice which always sings of happiness, joy,

and love, although it is too often assailed by those sinister voices which speak of nothing but misfortune, war, and death. It is the voice of my youth, which I have survived. Charny, forgive me, I shall no longer be young, I shall no longer smile, I shall no longer love!"

And the unhappy woman covered her burning eyes with her thin and delicate hands, and the tear of a queen filtered, brilliant as a diamond, between each of her fingers.

The count once more fell on his knees before her.

"Madame, in the name of Heaven!" said he, "order me to leave you, to fly from you, to die for you, but do not let me see you weep!"

And the count himself could hardly refrain from sobbing as he spoke.

"It is all over," said Marie Antoinette, raising her head, and speaking gently, with a smile replete with grace.

And, with a beautiful movement, she threw back her thick powdered hair, which had fallen on her neck, white as the driven snow.

"Yes, yes, it is over!" continued the queen; "I shall not afflict you any more; let us throw aside all these follies. Great God! it is strange that the woman should be so weak, when the queen so much needs to be firm. You come from Paris, do you not? Let us converse about it. You told me some things that I have forgotten; and yet they were very serious, were they not, Monsieur de Charny?"

"Be it so, Madame; let us return to that fatal subject: for, as you observe, what I have to tell you is very serious. Yes, I have just arrived from Paris, and I was present at the downfall of the monarchy."

"I was right to request you to return to *serious* mat-

ters, and most assuredly, Count, you make them more than sufficiently gloomy. A successful riot, — do you call that the downfall of the monarchy? What! is it because the Bastille has been taken, Monsieur de Charny, that you say the monarchy is abolished? Oh, you do not reflect that the Bastille was founded in France only in the fourteenth century, while monarchy has been taking root in the world during the last six thousand years."

"I should be well pleased to deceive myself in this matter, Madame," replied the count; "and then, instead of afflicting your Majesty's mind, I should bring to you the most consoling news. Unfortunately, the instrument will not produce any other sounds but those for which it was intended."

"Let us see, let us see; I will sustain you, — I who am but a woman; I will put you on the right path."

"Alas! I ask for nothing better."

"The Parisians have revolted, have they not?"

"Yes."

"In what proportion?"

"In the proportion of twelve to fifteen."

"How do you arrive at this calculation?"

"Oh, very easily: the people form twelve fifteenths of the body of the nation; there remain two fifteenths for the nobility and one for the clergy."

"Your calculations are exact, Count, and you have them at your fingers' ends. Have you read the works of Monsieur and Madame de Necker?"

"Those of Monsieur de Necker? Yes, Madame."

"Well, the proverb holds good," said the queen, gayly: "we are never betrayed but by our own friends. Well, then, here is my own calculation; will you listen to it?"

"With all respect."

"Among these twelve fifteenths there are six of women, are there not?"

"Yes, your Majesty. But —"

"Do not interrupt me. We said there were six fifteenths of women, so let us say six; two of indifferent or incapable old men, — is that too much?"

"No."

"There still remain four fifteenths, of which you will allow that at least two are cowards or lukewarm individuals, — I flatter the French nation. But finally, there remain two fifteenths; I will grant you that they are furious, robust, brave, and warlike. These two fifteenths, let us consider them as belonging to Paris only, for it is needless to speak of the provinces, is it not? It is only Paris that requires to be retaken?"

"Yes, Madame. But —"

"Always but; wait a moment. You can reply when I have concluded."

Monsieur de Charny bowed.

"I therefore estimate," continued the queen, "the two fifteenths of Paris at one hundred thousand men; is that sufficient?"

This time the count did not answer. The queen rejoined: —

"Well, then! to these hundred thousand men, badly armed, badly disciplined, and but little accustomed to battle, hesitating because they know they are doing wrong, I can oppose fifty thousand men, known throughout Europe for their bravery, with officers like you, Monsieur de Charny; besides that sacred cause which is denominated divine right, and in addition to all this, my own firm soul, which it is easy to move, but difficult to break."

The count still remained silent.

"Do you think," continued the queen, "that in a battle fought in such a cause, two men of the people are worth more than one of my soldiers?"

Charny said nothing.

"Speak, — answer me! — Do you think so?" exclaimed the queen, growing impatient.

"Madame," answered the Count, at last, throwing aside, on this order from the Queen, the respectful reserve which he had so long maintained, "on a field of battle, where these hundred thousand men would be isolated, undisciplined and badly armed as they are, your fifty thousand soldiers would defeat them in half an hour."

"Ah!" said the queen, "I was then right."

"Wait a moment. But it is not as you imagine. And, in the first place, your hundred thousand insurgents in Paris are five hundred thousand."

"Five hundred thousand?"

"Quite as many. You had omitted the women and children in your calculation! Oh, Queen of France! Oh, proud and courageous woman! consider them as so many men, these women of Paris; the day will perhaps come when they will compel you to consider them as so many demons."

"What can you mean, Count?"

"Madame, do you know what part a woman plays in a civil war? No, you do not. Well, I will tell you; and you will see that two soldiers against each woman would not be too many."

"Count, have you lost your senses?"

Charny smiled sadly.

"Did you see them at the Bastille?" asked he, "in the midst of the fire, in the midst of the shot, crying, 'To arms!' threatening with their fists your redoubtable Swiss soldiers, fully armed and equipped, uttering maledictions

over the bodies of the slain, with that voice that excites the hearts of the living. Have we not seen them boiling the pitch, dragging cannon along the streets, giving cartridges to those who were eager for the combat, and to the timid combatants a cartridge and a kiss? Do you know that as many women as men trod the drawbridge of the Bastille, and that at this moment, if the stones of the Bastille are falling, it is by pickaxes wielded by women's hands? Ah! Madame, do not overlook the women of Paris; take them into consideration; think also of the children who cast bullets, who sharpen swords, who throw paving-stones from a sixth story; think of them, for the bullet which was cast by a child may kill your best general from afar off, for the sword which it has sharpened will cut the hamstrings of your war-horses, for the clouds of stones which fall as from the skies will crush your dragoons and your guards; consider the old men, Madame, for if they have no longer the strength to raise a sword, they have still enough to serve as shields. At the taking of the Bastille, Madame, there were old men; do you know what they did, — those aged men whom you affect to despise? They placed themselves before the young men, who steadied their muskets on their shoulders, that they might take sure aim, so that the balls of your Swiss killed the helpless aged man, whose body served as a rampart to the vigorous youth. Include the aged men, for it is they who for the last three hundred years have related to succeeding generations the insults suffered by their mothers, — the desolation of their fields, caused by the devouring of their crops by the noblemen's game; the odium attached to their caste, crushed down by feudal privileges; and then the sons seize a hatchet, a club, a gun, in short, any weapon within their reach, and sally out to kill, fully charged with the curses of the aged

against all this tyranny, as the cannon is loaded with powder and iron. At Paris, at this moment, men, women, old men, and children are all crying, 'Liberty, deliverance!' Count everything that has a voice, Madame, and you may estimate the number of combatants in Paris at eight hundred thousand souls."

"Three hundred Spartans defeated the army of Xerxes, Monsieur de Charny."

"Yes; but to-day your three hundred Spartans have increased to eight hundred thousand, and your fifty thousand soldiers compose the army of Xerxes."

The queen raised her head, her hands convulsively clinched, and her face burning with shame and anger.

"Oh, let me fall from my throne," said she, "let me be torn to pieces by your five hundred thousand Parisians, but do not suffer me to hear a Charny, a man devoted to me, speak to me thus."

"If he speaks to you thus, Madame, it is because it is necessary; for this Charny has not in his veins a single drop of blood that is unworthy of his ancestors, or that is not all your own."

"Then let him march upon Paris with me, and there we will die together."

"Ignominiously," said the count, "without the possibility of a struggle. We shall not even fight; we shall disappear like the Philistines or the Amalekites. March upon Paris! — but you seem to be ignorant of a very important thing, — that at the moment we shall enter Paris, the houses will fall upon us as did the waves of the Red Sea upon Pharaoh; and you will leave in France a name which will be accursed, and your children will be killed like the cubs of a wolf."

"How then, should I fall, Count?" said the queen, with haughtiness; "teach me, I entreat you."

"As a victim, Madame," respectfully replied Monsieur de Charny; "as a queen, smiling and forgiving those who strike the fatal blow. Ah! if you had five hundred thousand men like me, I should say: "Let us set out on our march! — let us march to-night! let us march this very instant! And to-morrow you would reign at the Tuileries; to-morrow you would have reconquered your throne."

"Oh," exclaimed the queen, "even you have given way to despair, — you in whom I had founded all my hopes!"

"Yes, I despair, Madame; because all France thinks as Paris does; because your army, if it were victorious in Paris, would be swallowed up by Lyons, Rouen, Lille, Strasbourg, Nantes, and a hundred other devouring cities. Come, come, take courage, Madame; return your sword into its scabbard."

"Ah! was it for this," cried the queen, "that I have gathered around me so many brave men? Was it for this that I have inspired them with so much courage?"

"If that is not your opinion, Madame, give your orders, and we will march upon Paris this very night. Say what is your pleasure."

There was so much devotion in this offer of the count, that it intimidated the queen more than a refusal would have done. She threw herself in despair on a sofa, where she struggled for a considerable time with her haughty soul.

At length, raising her head: —

"Count," said she, "do you desire me to remain inactive?"

"I have the honor to advise your Majesty to remain so."

"It shall be so, — come back."

"Alas! Madame, have I offended you?" said the count, looking at the queen with a sorrowful expression. but in which beamed indescribable love.

"No — your hand."

The count bowed gracefully, and gave his hand to the queen.

"I must scold you," said Marie Antoinette, endeavoring to smile.

"For what reason, Madame?"

"How! you have a brother in the army, and I have only been accidentally informed of it."

"I do not comprehend — "

"This evening, a young officer of the Hussars of Bercheny — "

"Ah! my brother George!"

"Why have you never spoken to me of this young man? Why has he not a high rank in a regiment?"

"Because he is yet quite young and inexperienced; because he is not worthy of command as a chief officer; because, in fine, if your Majesty has condescended to look so low as upon me who am called Charny, to honor me with your friendship, it is not a reason that my relatives should be advanced, to the prejudice of a crowd of brave noblemen more deserving than my brothers."

"Have you then still another brother?"

"Yes, Madame; and one who is as ready to die for your Majesty as the two others."

"Does he not need anything?"

"Nothing, Madame. We have the happiness to have not only our lives, but also a fortune to lay at the feet of your Majesty."

While he was pronouncing these last words, — the queen being much moved by a trait of such delicate

probity, and he himself palpitating with affection caused by the gracious kindness of her Majesty, — they were suddenly disturbed in their conversation by a groan from the adjoining room.

The queen rose from her seat, went to the door, and screamed aloud. She had just perceived a woman who was writhing on the carpet, and suffering the most horrible convulsions.

"Oh, the countess," said she in a whisper to Monsieur de Charny; "she has overheard our conversation."

"No, Madame," answered he, "otherwise she would have warned your Majesty that we could be overheard."

And he sprang towards Andrée and raised her in his arms.

The queen remained standing at two steps from her, cold, pale, and trembling with anxiety.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A TRIO.

ANDRÉE was gradually recovering her senses, without knowing from whom assistance came, but she seemed instinctively to understand that some one had come to her assistance.

She raised her head, and her hands grasped the unhoped-for succor that was offered her.

But her mind did not recover as soon as her body; it still remained vacillating, stupefied, somnolent, during a few minutes.

After having succeeded in recalling her to physical life, Monsieur de Charny attempted to restore her moral senses; but he was struggling against a terrible and concentrated unconsciousness.

Finally she fastened her open but haggard eyes upon him, and with her still remaining delirium, without recognizing the person who was supporting her, she gave a loud shriek, and abruptly pushed him from her.

During all this time the queen turned her eyes in another direction; she, a woman; she, whose mission it was to console, to strengthen this afflicted friend, — she abandoned her.

Charny raised Andrée in his powerful arms, notwithstanding the resistance she attempted to make, and turning round to the queen, who was still standing, pale and motionless: —

"Pardon me, Madame," said he; "something extraordinary must doubtless have happened. Madame de Charny is not subject to fainting, and this is the first time I have ever seen her in this state."

"She must then be suffering greatly," said the queen, who still reverted to the idea that Andrée had overheard their conversation.

"Yes, without doubt she is suffering," answered the count, "and it is for that reason that I shall ask your Majesty the permission to have her carried to her own apartment. She needs the assistance of her attendants."

"Do so," said the queen, raising her hand to the bell.

But scarcely had Andrée heard the ringing of the bell, when she wrestled fearfully, and cried out in her delirium, —

"Oh, Gilbert, that Gilbert!"

The queen trembled at the sound of this name, and the astonished count placed his wife upon a sofa.

At this moment a servant appeared, to answer the bell.

"It is nothing," said the queen, making a sign to him with her hand to leave the room.

Then, being once more left to themselves, the count and the queen looked at each other. Andrée had again closed her eyes, and seemed to suffer from a second attack.

Monsieur de Charny, who was kneeling near the sofa, prevented her from falling off it.

"Gilbert," repeated the queen, "what name is that?"

"We must inquire."

"I think I know it," said Marie Antoinette; "I think it is not the first time I have heard the countess pronounce that name."

But as if she had been threatened by this recollection of the queen, and this threat had surprised her in the midst of her convulsions, Andrée opened her eyes, stretched out her arms to heaven, and making a great effort, stood upright.

Her first look, an intelligent look, was this time directed at Monsieur de Charny, whom she recognized, and greeted with caressing smiles.

Then, as if this involuntary manifestation of her thought had been unworthy of her Spartan soul, Andrée turned her eyes in another direction, and perceived the queen. She immediately made a profound inclination.

"Ah! good Heaven, what then is the matter with you, Madame?" said Monsieur de Charny; "you have alarmed me, — you, who are usually so strong and so courageous, to have suffered from a swoon!"

"Sir," said she, "such fearful events have taken place at Paris, that when men are trembling, it is by no means strange that women should faint. Have you then left Paris? — oh! you have done rightly."

"Good God! Countess," said Charny, in a doubting tone, "was it then on my account that you underwent all this suffering!"

Andrée again looked at her husband and the queen, but did not answer.

"Why, certainly that is the reason, Count, — why should you doubt it?" answered Marie Antoinette. "The Countess de Charny is not a queen; she has the right to be alarmed for her husband's safety."

Charny could detect jealousy in the queen's language.

"Oh, Madame," said he, "I am quite certain that the countess fears still more for her sovereign's safety than for mine."

"But, in fine," asked Marie Antoinette, "why and

how is it that we found you in a swoon in this room, Countess?"

"Oh, it would be impossible for me to tell you that, Madame; I cannot myself account for it; but in this life of fatigue, of terror, and painful emotions, which we have led for the last three days, nothing can be more natural, it seems to me, than the fainting of a woman."

"This is true," murmured the queen, who perceived that Andrée did not wish to be compelled to speak out.

"But," rejoined Andrée, in her turn, with that extraordinary degree of calmness which never abandoned her after she had once become the mistress of her will, and which was so much the more embarrassing in difficult circumstances that it could easily be discerned to be mere affectation, and concealed feelings altogether human; "but even your Majesty's eyes are at this moment in tears."

And the count thought he could perceive in the words of his wife that ironical accent he had remarked but a few moments previously in the language of the queen.

"Madame," said he to Andrée, with a degree of severity to which his voice was evidently not accustomed, "it is not astonishing that the queen's eyes should be suffused with tears, for the queen loves her people, and the blood of the people has been shed."

"Fortunately, God has spared yours, sir," said Andrée, who was still no less cold and impenetrable.

"Yes; but it is not of her Majesty that we are speaking, Madame, but of you; let us then return to our subject; the queen permits us to do so."

Marie Antoinette made an affirmative gesture with her head.

"You were alarmed, then, were you not?"

"Who, I?"

"You have been suffering; do not deny it; some accident has happened to you — what was it? — I know not what it can have been, but you will tell us."

"You are mistaken, sir."

"Have you had any reason to complain of any one — of a man?" Andrée turned pale.

"I have had no reason to complain of any one, sir; I have just come from the king's apartment."

"Did you come direct from there?"

"Yes, direct. Her Majesty can easily ascertain that fact."

"If such be the case," said Marie Antoinette, "the countess must be right. The king loves her too well, and knows that my own affection for her is too strong, for him to disoblige her in any way whatever."

"But you mentioned a name," said Charny, still persisting.

"A name?"

"Yes; when you were recovering your senses."

Andrée looked at the queen as if to ask her for assistance; but either because the queen did not understand her, or did not wish to do so: —

"Yes," said she, "you pronounced the name Gilbert."

"Gilbert! did I pronounce the name of Gilbert?" exclaimed Andrée, in a tone so full of terror that the count was more affected by this cry than he had been by her fainting.

"Yes!" exclaimed he, "you pronounced that name."

"Ah, indeed!" said Andrée, "that is singular."

And by degrees, as the clouds close again after having been rent asunder by the lightning, the countenance of the young woman, so violently agitated at the sound of that fatal name, recovered its serenity, and but a few muscles of her lovely face continued to tremble almost

imperceptibly, like the last flashes of the tempest which vanish in the horizon.

"Gilbert!" she repeated; "I do not know that name."

"Yes, Gilbert," repeated the queen; "come, try to recollect, my dear Andrée."

"But, Madame," said the count to Marie Antoinette, "perhaps it is mere chance, and this name may be unknown to the countess."

"No," said Andrée, "no; it is not unknown to me. It is that of a learned man, of a skilful physician who has just arrived from America, I believe, and who became intimate while there with Monsieur de Lafayette."

"Well, then?" asked the count.

"Well, then!" repeated Andrée, with the greatest presence of mind; "I do not know him personally, but he is said to be a very honorable man."

"Then why all this emotion, my dear countess?" observed the queen.

"This emotion! Have I then been excited?"

"Yes; one would have said that when you pronounced the name Gilbert, you felt as if undergoing torture."

"It is possible; I will tell you how it happened. I met a person in the king's cabinet, who was dressed in black, a man of austere countenance, who spoke of gloomy and horrible subjects; he related with the most frightful reality the assassination of Monsieur de Launay and Monsieur de Flesselles. I became terrified on hearing this intelligence, and I fell into the swoon in which you saw me. It may be that I spoke at that time; perhaps I then pronounced the name of Monsieur Gilbert."

"It is possible," repeated Monsieur de Charny, who was evidently not disposed to push the questioning any further. "But now you feel recovered, do you not, Madame?"

"Perfectly."

"I will then beg of you to do one thing, Monsieur de Charny," said the queen.

"I am at the disposal of your Majesty."

"Go and find out Messieurs de Besenval, de Broglie, and de Lambesq. Tell them to quarter their troops where they now are. The king will decide to-morrow in council what must be done."

The count bowed; but before leaving the room, he cast a last look at Andrée.

That look was full of affectionate anxiety.

It did not escape the queen.

"Countess," said she, "will you not return to the king's apartment with me?"

"No, Madame, no," replied Andrée, quickly.

"And why not?"

"I ask your Majesty's permission to withdraw to my own apartment. The emotions I have undergone make me feel the want of rest."

"Come now, Countess, speak frankly," said the queen. "Have you had any disagreement with his Majesty?"

"Oh, by no means, Madame! absolutely nothing."

"Oh, tell me, if anything has happened! The king does not always spare my friends."

"The king is, as usual, full of kindness to me, but —"

"But you have no great wish to see him. Is it not so? There must positively be something at the bottom of all this, Count," said the queen, with affected gayety.

At this moment Andrée directed so expressive, so supplicating a look at the queen, — a look so full of revelations, that the latter understood it was time to put an end to this minor war.

"In fact, Countess," said she, "we will leave Monsieur

de Charny to execute the commission I intrusted to him, and you can retire or remain here, according to your choice."

"Thank you, Madame," said Andrée.

"Go, then, Monsieur de Charny," continued Marie Antoinette, while she noticed the expression of gratitude which was visible on the features of Andrée.

Either the count did not perceive, or did not wish to perceive it. He took the hand of his wife, and complimented her on the return of her strength and color.

Then, making a most respectful bow to the queen, he left the room.

But while leaving the room he exchanged a last look with Marie Antoinette.

The queen's look meant to say, "Return quickly." That of the count replied, "As soon as possible."

As to Andrée, she followed with her eyes every one of her husband's movements, her bosom palpitating, and almost breathless.

She seemed to accelerate with her wishes the slow and noble step with which he approached the door. She, as it were, pushed him out of the room with the whole power of her will.

Therefore was it that, as soon as he had closed the door, as soon as he had disappeared, all the strength that Andrée had summoned to assist her in surmounting the difficulties of her position abandoned her; her face became pale, her limbs failed beneath her, and she fell into an arm-chair which was within her reach, while she endeavored to apologize to the queen for her involuntary breach of etiquette.

The queen ran to the chimney-piece, took a smelling-bottle of salts, and making Andrée inhale them, she was soon restored to her senses, but more by the power of her

own will than by the efficacy of the attentions she received at the royal hands.

In fact, there was something strange in the conduct of these two women. The queen seemed to love Andrée; Andrée respected the queen greatly, and nevertheless at certain moments they did not appear to be, the one an affectionate queen, the other a devoted subject, but two determined enemies.

As we have already said, the potent will of Andrée soon restored her strength. She rose up, respectfully removed the queen's hand, and, courtesying to her: —

"Your Majesty," said she, "has given me permission to retire to my own room."

"Yes, undoubtedly; and you are always free, dear Countess, and this you know full well. Etiquette is not intended for you. But before you retire, have you nothing to tell me?"

"I, Madame?" asked Andrée.

"Yes, you, without doubt."

"No: what should I have to tell you?"

"In regard to this Monsieur Gilbert, the sight of whom has made so strong an impression upon you."

Andrée trembled; but she merely made a sign of denial.

"In that case, I will not detain you any longer, dear Andrée; you may go."

And the queen took a step towards the door of the dressing-room, which communicated with her bedroom.

Andrée, on her side, having made her obeisance to the queen in the most irreproachable manner, was going towards the door.

But at the very moment she was about to open it, steps were heard in the corridor, and a hand was placed on the external handle of the door.

At the same time the voice of Louis XVI. was heard, giving orders for the night to his valet.

"The king, Madame!" said Andrée, retreating several steps; "the king!"

"And what of that? Yes, it is the king," said Marie Antoinette. "Does he terrify you to such a degree as this?"

"Madame, in the name of Heaven," cried Andrée, "let me not see the king! Let me not meet the king face to face, at all events this evening. I should die of shame."

"But finally you will tell me —"

"Everything — yes, everything — if your Majesty requires it. But hide me!"

"Go into my boudoir," said Marie Antoinette. "You can leave it as soon as the king himself retires. Rest assured your captivity will not be of long duration; the king never remains here long."

"Oh, thanks! — thanks!" exclaimed the countess.

And rushing into the boudoir, she disappeared at the very moment that the king, having opened the door, appeared upon the threshold of the chamber.

The king entered.

CHAPTER XXX.

A KING AND A QUEEN.

THE queen, after glancing round, exchanged friendly greetings with the king, who gave her his hand.

"To what good chance," asked Marie Antoinette, "do I owe this visit?"

"Really to chance; you have spoken correctly, Madame. I have just met De Charny, who said he was commissioned by you to go and tell all our warriors to keep themselves quiet. It affords me much pleasure that you have taken so wise a resolution, and I was unwilling to pass your apartment without thanking you."

"Yes," said the queen, "I have in fact reconsidered the matter, and have come to the conclusion that it is decidedly the best course to leave the troops at rest, and thus to afford no pretext for intestine war."

"Good! that is right!" said the king. "I am delighted to find you of that opinion. I knew very well that I should bring you over to it at last."

"Your Majesty sees that you have gained your object without much trouble; since, uninfluenced by you, I have formed my decision."

"Well done! that is a proof that you are almost reasonable, and when I have communicated to you some of my reflections, you will be so altogether."

"But if we are of the same opinion, Sire, to impart to me these reflections would be useless."

"Oh, calm yourself, Madame! I have no wish to enter upon discussion; you know well that I like it no more than you do. This will be a conversation. Come, now; are you not glad to talk with me occasionally about the affairs of France, as a good wife does with her spouse about domestic matters?"

These last words were uttered with that perfect good-nature which Louis XVI. invariably manifested towards his familiar friends.

"Oh, Sire," answered the queen, "I am always happy to do so; but is the time well chosen?"

"I believe that it is. You desire that there should be no hostile demonstration. Did you not this moment say so?"

"I did."

"But you have not explained to me your reason."

"You did not ask me."

"Well, I now ask you."

"Impotence!"

"Ah! that is the reason, is it? If you thought yourself the stronger, you would make war."

"If I thought that I was the stronger, I should burn Paris."

"Oh, I was certain that your motives for not wishing war were not the same as mine."

"Well, let us hear yours."

"Mine?" asked the king.

"Yes," answered Marie Antoinette, "yours."

"I have but one."

"Mention it."

"Oh, that is soon done! I do not wish to enter into war with the people, because I find that the people are right."

Marie Antoinette made a gesture of surprise.

"Right!" she exclaimed, "the people right in rebelling!"

"Certainly."

"Right in storming the Bastille, in killing the governor, in murdering the provost of the merchants, in exterminating your soldiers?"

"Yes, by Heaven, they were!"

"Oh," exclaimed the queen, "these are your reflections, and it was such reflections as these that you wished me to hear!"

"I have told you them as they occurred to me."

"At dinner?"

"Good!" said the king, "we are about to fall back on the subject of nourishment. You cannot pardon me for eating. You would have me poetic and ethereal. What do you wish! In my family we eat. Not only did Henry IV. eat, but he was also a hard drinker; the great and poetic Louis XIV. eat enough to make one blush; King Louis XV., to make sure of good eating and drinking, baked his biscuits with his own royal hands, and had his coffee made by Madame Dubarry. As for me, what would you have? When I am hungry, I cannot resist my appetite; I am compelled to follow the example of my ancestors, Louis XV., Louis XIV., and Henry IV. If this is a constitutional necessity, pray be lenient with me; if it is a fault, forgive me."

"But, Sire, you must confess —"

"That I ought not to eat when I am hungry; no," said the king, tranquilly shaking his head.

"I am not talking of that: I speak of the people."

"Ah!"

"You must confess that the people have been in the wrong."

"In rebelling? Not at all. Come, let us review all

our ministers. Since we began to reign, how many have really concerned themselves about the welfare of the people? Two, — Turgot and Monsieur de Necker. You and your coterie have banished them. For one of these gentlemen the people have raised a tumult; for the other they will perhaps raise a revolution. Let us speak a little of the others! Ah! they are charming fellows, are they not? Monsieur de Maurepas, that creature of my aunts, a song-writer! It is not the ministers who should sing, it is the people. Monsieur de Calonne? That epigrammatic answer he made you was admirable, I know well, — a sentence that will live. Once when you asked him for something, — I forget what, — he gallantly replied: 'If it is possible, it is done: if it is impossible, it shall be done.' That epigram cost the people to the tune of a hundred millions. You should not be astonished, therefore, if they find it a little less witty than you do. In truth, — pray understand me, Madame, — if I retain all those who fleece the people, and dismiss all those who love them, it will not be the best means of tranquillizing them and of making them more attached to our government."

"Good! Then insurrection is a right. Proclaim this principle from the house-tops. In truth I am glad that it is to me alone that you have communicated such ideas. If others heard you!"

"Oh, yes, yes!" replied the king; "you tell me nothing new. Yes, I know well that if Polignac, Dreux-Brézé, Clermont-Tonnerre, and Coigny heard me, they would shrug their shoulders behind me, — I know it well; but in reality they pity me after a very different fashion. That Polignac, to whom one fine morning you made over the county of Fénestrange, which cost you twelve hundred thousand livres; Sartine, to whom I have already given

a pension of eighty-nine thousand livres, and who has just received from you two hundred thousand livres ostensibly as a stipendiary fund; the prince of Deux-Ponts, to whom you compelled me to grant nine hundred and forty-five thousand livres to clear off his debts; Marie de Laval and Madame de Magneville, who each finger a pension of eighty thousand livres; Coigny, who is loaded with all sorts of pensions, and who once, when I thought of making some reduction in his appointments, hedged me in between two doors, and would have beaten me, I believe, if I had not consented to give him all that he wished, — all these people are your friends, are they not? Well, speak about them. But this much I will say, and I know you will not believe it, because it is the truth; if instead of being at court, these friends of yours had been in the Bastille, the people would have fortified the place instead of demolishing it."

"Oh!" exclaimed the queen, with a gesture of anger she was unable to suppress.

"You may say what you please, but that is the case," said Louis, tranquilly.

"Oh, your beloved people! Ah, well! they will not have occasion much longer to hate my friends, for they are going into exile."

"They are going away!" exclaimed the king.

"Yes, they are going away."

"Polignac? the women?"

"Yes."

"So much the better," exclaimed the king, "so much the better! God be praised!"

"How so much the better? How God be praised? Are you not sorry?"

"No, indeed; far from it. Do they need money to take them away? I will give it them. That money at least

will not be ill employed, I will warrant. I wish you a pleasant journey, gentlemen; and you also, ladies," said the king, all radiant.

"Yes," said the queen, "I can understand that you like cowardice."

"Well, let us understand each other; you are doing them justice at last."

"They are not dismissed; they are deserting."

"No matter, so that they take themselves off!"

"And to think that it is your family who have advised such despicable conduct!"

"My family advised your favorites to go away! I never gave my family credit for so much sense. And tell me which members of my family have done me this service, that I may thank them."

"Your aunt Adelaide; your brother D'Artois."

"My brother D'Artois! Do you believe he will follow the advice he gives? Do you think that he also will go away?"

"Why not?" exclaimed Marie Antoinette, trying to vex the king.

"Heaven grant it!" exclaimed Louis; "let Monsieur d'Artois take his departure; I should say to him what I have said to the others: A good journey to you, brother d'Artois! I wish you a very pleasant journey!"

"Ah! your brother!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette.

"True; but what quality has he to make his presence desirable? A good little fellow enough, who lacks neither wit nor courage, I grant you; but who has no brains; who acts the French prince like a fop of the time of Louis XIII., — a blundering blockhead, who has compromised even you, the wife of Cæsar."

"Cæsar!" muttered the queen, with cutting irony.

"Or Claudius, if you like it better," answered the

king; "for you know, Madame, that Claudius, as well as Nero, was a Cæsar."

The queen looked down. This historical coolness confused her not a little.

"Claudius," continued the king, — "since you prefer the name of Claudius to that of Cæsar, — Claudius was obliged one evening, as you are aware, to shut the gate of Versailles, in order to give you a lesson when you stayed out too late. It was Monsieur d'Artois who got you that lesson. I shall not miss, therefore, the Count d'Artois. As for my aunt, ah, well! we know what we know about her. She is another who deserves to be enrolled in the family of the Cæsars. But I say no more; she is my aunt. Let her go in peace; I shall not miss her a whit more than I shall the others. Then, there is Monsieur de Provence; do you think I should feel sorry at his leaving? A good journey to him!"

"Oh, he does not speak of going!"

"So much the worse! You see, my dear, Monsieur de Provence knows Latin too well for me. I am obliged to speak English to be even with him. It was Monsieur de Provence who put Beaumarchais on our shoulders, thrusting him in at Bicêtre, For-Lévêque and I know not where, on his own private authority, and a fine return has been made us for all this by this same Monsieur de Beaumarchais. Ah, Monsieur de Provence will remain, will he? So much the worse, so much the worse! There is one thing of which I should like you to be aware, Madame, and it is this, — in your whole household, I know but one honest man, Monsieur de Charny."

The queen blushed and turned away.

"We were talking about the Bastille," continued the king, after a short silence, "and you were lamenting that it was taken."

"Be seated at least, Sire," replied the queen, "since it would appear that you have still many things to tell me."

"No, thank you, I like better to walk while speaking; by thus walking, I attend to my health, about which nobody else seems to take the slightest concern; for though my appetite is good, my digestion is bad. Do you know what they are saying at this moment? They are saying: 'The king has supped; the king sleeps.' Now you see how I sleep, — bolt upright, trying to aid my digestion while I talk on politics with my wife. Ah, Madame, I am expiating, — expiating!"

"Expiating what, if you please?"

"The sins of a century whose scapegoat I am; I am expiating the sins of Madame de Pompadour, Madame Dubarry, the Parc-aux-Cerfs; the sins of poor Latude, who for thirty years rotted in dungeons, and was immortalized by suffering, — one more victim who caused the Bastille to be detested. Poor fellow! Ah, Madame! what blunders I have made in giving effect to the stupid measures of others! Philosophers, political economists, scientists, men of letters, I have taken part in persecuting them all. Good Heavens! these men asked for nothing better than to love me. If they had loved me they would have at once constituted the glory and the happiness of my reign. Monsieur Rousseau, for example, that bugbear of Sartines and others — ah well! I saw him one day myself, that day you made him come to Trianon, you recollect. His clothes, it is true, were ill brushed, and it is also true that his beard was long; but he was nevertheless a good man. If I had donned my rough gray coat and thick stockings, and had said to Monsieur Rousseau, 'Let us go and gather mosses in the woods of Ville d'Avray —'"

"Ah, well! what then?" interrupted the queen, with supreme contempt.

"Well, then Monsieur Rousseau would not have written the 'Vicar of Savoy' nor the 'Social Contract.'"

"Yes, yes, I am well aware of that; that is the way you reason," said Marie Antoinette. "You are a prudent man; you fear your people as the dog does his master."

"Not so, but as the master fears his dog; it is something to be sure that one's dog will not bite him. Madame, when I walk with Médor, that Pyrenean hound of which the king of Spain made me a present, I feel quite proud of his friendship. Laugh if you will, but it is nevertheless true that Médor, if he was not my friend, would chew me up with his great white teeth. You see I say to him: 'Pretty Médor, good Médor,' and he licks me. I prefer his tongue to his tusks."

"Be it so, then; flatter the revolutionists, caress them, throw titbits to them."

"Oh, the very thing I am going to do! I have no other project, believe me. Yes, my decision is taken. I will lay up a little money, and then I will deal with these gentlemen as if they were so many Cerberi. Ah, but stay! There is Monsieur de Mirabeau —"

"Oh, yes! tell me about that ferocious brute."

"With fifty thousand livres a month he will be a Médor, whereas if we wait, he will not perhaps be satisfied with less than half a million."

The queen laughed scornfully.

"Oh, the idea of flattering people like him!"

"Monsieur Bailly," continued the king, "having become minister of arts — an office which I am going to institute for my amusement — will be another Médor.

Pardon me, Madame, if I do not entertain the same views that you do, but I am of the same opinion as my ancestor Henry IV. He was a profound politician if there ever was one, and I remember well what he said."

"What did he say?"

"'Flies are not caught with vinegar.'"

"Sancho said that also, or something very like it."

"Well, Sancho would have made the people of Barataria very happy, had there been such a place as Barataria."

"Sire, your ancestor Henry IV., whom you bring forward, caught wolves as well as flies. Witness Marshal de Biron, whose throat he cut. He could say then what he pleased. By reasoning like Henry and acting as you do, you take all prestige from royalty, which can only exist by prestige. You degrade the principle, 'What will majesty become?' Majesty, I am aware, is but a word, but in this word centre all the royal virtues: 'He who respects, loves; he who loves, obeys —'"

"Ah! let us speak of majesty," interrupted the king, with a smile; "yes, let us speak of it. You, for example, are as majestic as one can be; and I know of none in Europe, not even your mother, Marie Thérèse, who has promoted as you have the science of majesty."

"I understand you; you mean that my majesty does not prevent my being abhorred by the French people."

"I do not say 'abhorred,' my dear Antoinette," said the king, gently; "but perhaps you are not so much loved as you deserve to be."

"Sir," said the queen, deeply wounded, "you only echo all that is said. I have, nevertheless, injured nobody; on the contrary, I have often benefited my sub-

jects. Why should they hate me as you say? Why should they not love me, were it not that there are people who make it their business to repeat daily, 'The queen is not loved!' Are you aware, sir, that one voice alone is needed to say that, in order that a hundred voices should repeat it; a hundred voices evoke ten thousand. Then, in unison with these ten thousand voices everybody repeats: 'The queen is not loved!' And the queen is not loved simply because one person said: 'The queen is not loved!'"

"Good heavens!" muttered the king.

"Thank goodness," interrupted the queen, "I have but little faith in popularity; but I also believe that my unpopularity is exaggerated. Praises are not showered down upon me, it is true; but I was once the popular idol, and because they loved me too much, they now run to the opposite extreme and hate me."

"Stay, Madame," said the king; "you know not the whole truth, and are still laboring under a delusion; were we not talking of the Bastille?"

"Yes."

"Well, there was a large room in the Bastille full of all sorts of books written against you. They will surely have burned all that."

"With what did these books accuse me?"

"Ah, you very well know, Madame, that I take not upon me to be your accuser, and have no wish to be your judge. When these pamphlets appeared, I had the whole edition seized and buried in the Bastille. But sometimes these books fall into my own hands. For instance, I have one here now," said the king, striking his coat pocket, "and it is simply abominable."

"Show it me," cried the queen.

"I cannot," said the king; "it contains engravings."

"And have you come to that? Have you reached that point of blindness and imbecility that you do not even attempt to trace all these base slanders to their source?"

"That is just what I have done. I have traced them to their source; there is not one of my lieutenants of police who has not grown gray in that service."

"Then you know the author of these indignities?"

"I know one of the authors, at least, — Monsieur Furth, the author of that one; there is his receipt for 22,500 livres. You see when the thing is worth the trouble, I do not regard the expense."

"But the others, — the others!"

"Ah, they are often poor hungry wretches who vegetate in England or Holland. We are bitten, stung, irritated; we ferret them out, expecting to find a serpent, a crocodile, to crush, to kill. Nothing of the sort; but we find an insect, so mean, so base, so despicable, that we dare not dirty our hands by touching it, even to punish it."

"That is all very fine! But if you care not to touch insects, why not accuse boldly the sun which calls them into existence. In truth, we may safely affirm that their sun is Philip of Orléans."

"Ha!" exclaimed the king, clapping his hands, "are you there? Monsieur d'Orléans! nay, nay, seek not to embroil me with him."

"Embroil you with your enemy, Sire! Oh, the idea is original!"

The king shrugged his shoulders.

"There now," said he, "there is your system of interpreting matters. Monsieur d'Orléans! You attack Monsieur d'Orleans, who has just placed himself under my orders to fight the rebels, — who leaves Paris and hastens to Versailles! Monsieur d'Orléans my enemy! Truly,

Madame, the hatred you bear to the house of Orléans surpasses all conception."

"Oh, he has come, has he? and do you know the reason? He fears that his absence might be remarked in the general demonstration of loyalty. He has come because he is a coward."

"Indeed! We are going to begin again. Whoever first imputed such motives to Orléans is a coward. You had it inserted in your gazette that he showed the white feather at Ushant, because you wished to dishonor him. Ah, well! it was a calumny, Madame. Philip was not afraid; Philip did not flee. Had he fled, he would not belong to the family. The Orléans are brave. The fact is indisputable. The chief of the family, who seemed rather to have descended from Henry III. than from Henry IV., was brave, in spite of D'Effiat and Chevalier de Lorraine. He braved death at the battle of Cassel. The regent had indeed some trifling things to say against him on the score of manners; but he exposed his life at Steinkerque, at Nerwinde, and at Almanza like the meanest soldier in his army. Tell only half the truth, Madame, if you will; but tell not the evil that has no existence."

"Your Majesty is in the vein of whitewashing all the revolutionists. You will see, you will see what that fellow is worth. Oh, if I regret the destruction of the Bastille, it is on his account; yes, I repent that criminals were thrown into it, while he was at large."

"Ah, well!" said the king, "if Monsieur d'Orléans had been in the Bastille, we should be in a fine predicament to-day."

"In that case what would have happened, I should like to know?"

"You are aware, Madame, that his bust was prome-

naded round, crowned with flowers, together with that of Monsieur de Necker."

"I am."

"Ah, well! once out of the Bastille, Monsieur d'Orléans would have been king of France."

"And perhaps you would have thought that just," said Marie Antoinette, in a tone of bitter irony.

"I' faith, yes; shrug your shoulders as much as you please. To judge others, I look at matters from their point of view. From the height of the throne we cannot well see the people; I descend to their level, and I ask myself if as a burgess or a clod-hopper I could suffer a noble to count me among his cows and poultry as a chattel! if, as a farmer, I could endure that my lord's ten thousand pigeons should daily eat ten grains each of wheat, oats, or buckwheat, that is to say, about two bushels, whilst his hares and rabbits browsed on my clover, whilst his wild boars rooted up my potatoes, whilst his tax-gatherers tithed my produce, whilst my lord himself kissed my wife and daughters, whilst the king pressed my sons into his army, and whilst the priest, in his moments of passion, condemned my soul to endless misery."

"Why, sir," interrupted the queen, whose eyes flashed thunderbolts, "you should take a pickaxe and go and aid in the demolition of the Bastille."

"You laugh," replied the king; "but, by my troth, I should go, were it not ridiculous for a king to handle a pickaxe, when he could have the same work done by a single dash of the pen. Yes, I should take the pickaxe, and they would applaud me, as I applauded those who accomplished the business. Nay, Madame, they did me a famous service in demolishing the Bastille, and to you they did a still greater; yes, to you, who can no longer

throw, according to the whims of your friends, honest people into dungeons."

"Honest people in the Bastille! I — I sent honest people there! Oh, perhaps Monsieur de Rohan is an honest man!"

"Oh, speak no more of him; I speak not of him myself. Our sending him there was not a success, seeing that the parliament set him at liberty. Besides, it was no place for a prince of the Church, since in our time forgers were sent to the Bastille; and, indeed, I ask what forgers and robbers were doing there. Have I not prisons in Paris which cost me dear enough for the entertainment of these gentry? But let the forgers and robbers pass; the evil is that honest men were sent there."

"Honest men?"

"Undoubtedly; I have seen this very day an honest man who was incarcerated there, and who only got out a very short time since."

"When was that?"

"This morning."

"You have this evening seen a man who got out of the Bastille this morning?"

"I have just parted with him."

"Who is it?"

"Faith, one of your acquaintance."

"Of my acquaintance!"

"Yes."

"Might I ask his name?"

"Doctor Gilbert."

"Gilbert! Gilbert!" exclaimed the queen. "What! he whom Andrée named on returning to her senses?"

"Precisely so; it must have been he; I could swear to it."

"Was that man in the Bastille?"

"Faith, Madame, one would suppose that you were ignorant of the fact."

"I am entirely ignorant of it."

And, perceiving that the king looked astonished: —

"Unless," continued the queen, "for some reason I may have forgotten it."

"Ah! there," exclaimed the king, "for these acts of injustice there is always a reason which one forgets. But though you may have forgotten both the reason and the doctor, Madame de Charny has forgotten neither, I will answer for it."

"Sire! Sire!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette.

"There must have been something between them," the king continued.

"Sire, please to refrain!" said the queen, looking anxiously towards the boudoir, where Andrée was concealed, and could hear all that was said.

"Oh, yes!" said the king, laughing; "you fear that De Charny may chance to learn. Poor De Charny!"

"Sire, I entreat you; Madame de Charny is one of the purest of women, and I should rather believe, I assure you, that this Doctor Gilbert — "

"Pshaw!" interrupted the king, "do you accuse that honest fellow? I know what I know; and the worst of it is that, knowing so much, I do not yet know all."

"Really, I am horrified that you should persist in entertaining such suspicions," said the queen, without removing her eyes from the cabinet.

"Oh," continued Louis, "I am in no hurry; I shall lose nothing by waiting a little. The beginning promises me an interesting conclusion, and I can learn the conclusion from Gilbert himself, he being now my doctor."

"Your doctor! that fellow your doctor! You can trust the life of the king to a stranger!"

"Oh," replied the king, coolly, "I have confidence in my first impressions, and I needed only a glance to read that man's inmost soul."

The queen uttered a groan, from mingled anger and disdain.

"You can sneer at me as you will," said the king, "but you can never shake my confidence in the learning and science of Doctor Gilbert."

"Infatuation!"

"I should like to see you in my place. I should like to know if Monsieur Mesmer was not able to make some impression on you and Madame de Lamballe."

"Monsieur Mesmer?" asked the queen, blushing.

"Yes; four years ago you went disguised to one of his meetings. Oh, my police are drilled thoroughly. You see I know all."

And the king, while uttering these words, smiled kindly on Marie Antoinette.

"You know all, Sire," answered the queen; "and you are a good dissembler, for you have never once spoken to me on the subject."

"Why should I have done so? I am sure the novelists and newspaper reporters abused you sufficiently on that score. But to return to Gilbert and at the same time to Mesmer. Monsieur Mesmer placed you round a vat, touched you with a steel rod, surrounded himself with a thousand phantasmagories, like the quack that he was. Gilbert uses no such illusions; he extends his hand over a woman; she sleeps, and sleeping, talks."

"Talks!" muttered the queen, terrified.

"Yes," replied the king, not unwilling to prolong somewhat his wife's little nervousness; "yes, put to sleep by

Gilbert, she talks, and, believe me, says very strange things."

The queen grew pale.

"Madame de Charny may have said very strange things!" she muttered.

"Most strange," said the king. "It was very fortunate for her —"

"Hush! hush!" interrupted Marie Antoinette.

"Why hush? I say that it was very fortunate for her that I alone heard what she said in her sleep."

"Oh, for pity's sake, Sire, say not a word more!"

"Indeed, I had much rather talk no more. I feel ready to drop with weariness; and as I eat when I am hungry, so do I go to bed when I am sleepy. So good-night, Madame, and may our conversation leave upon you a salutary impression."

"In what way, Sire?"

"The people were right in undoing what we and our friends had done, witness my poor Doctor Gilbert. Adieu, Madame; trust me that after signalling the danger, I shall have the courage to prevent it. Pleasant dreams, Antoinette."

And the king moved towards the door.

"*À propos*," said he, turning round, "warn Madame de Charny that she has to make her peace with the doctor if it is not now too late. Adieu."

He slowly retired, shutting the doors himself with all the satisfaction of the mechanic when his locks work well under the pressure of his fingers.

The king had not taken half a dozen steps in the corridor, when the countess issued from the boudoir, ran to the doors and bolted them, and to the windows and drew the curtains. She seemed to be excited with all the energy of rage and madness. Then, having assured her-

self that she could neither be seen nor heard, she returned to the queen with a heart-rending cry, fell on her knees, and exclaimed, —

"Save me, Madame; for Heaven's sake, save me!"

Then, after a pause followed by a long sigh, she added: "And I will tell you all."

END OF VOL. I.

THE ROMANCES OF

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

THE TAKING OF THE BASTILLE

Being Part of

ANGE PITOU

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ANGE PITOU.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT THE QUEEN'S THOUGHTS WERE, DURING THE NIGHT FROM JULY 14 TO JULY 15, 1789.

How long the interview between Andrée and the queen lasted, it would be impossible for us to say; but it was certainly of considerable duration, for at about eleven o'clock that night the door of the queen's boudoir was seen to open, and on the threshold Andrée, almost on her knees, kissing the hand of Marie Antoinette. After which, having raised herself up, the young woman dried her eyes, red with weeping, while the queen, on her side, re-entered her room.

Andrée, on the contrary, walked away rapidly, as if she desired to escape from her own thoughts.

After this, the queen was alone. When the lady of the bedchamber entered the room, to assist her in undressing, she found her pacing the room with rapid strides, and her eyes flashing with excitement. She made a quick movement with her hand, which meant to say, "Leave me."

The lady of the bedchamber left the room, without offering an observation.

The queen again found herself alone. She had given orders that no one should disturb her, unless it was to announce the arrival of important news from Paris.

Andrée did not appear again.

As for the king, after he had conversed with Monsieur de la Rochefoucault, who endeavored to make him comprehend the difference there was between a riot and a revolution, — he declared himself fatigued, went to bed, and slept as quietly as if he had returned from a hunt, and the stag (a well-trained courtier) had suffered himself to be taken in the grand basin of the fountain called the Swiss.

The queen, however, wrote several letters, went into an adjoining room, where her two children slept under the care of Madame de Tourzel, and then went to bed, not for the sake of sleeping, like the king, but merely to meditate more at ease.

But soon after, when silence reigned around Versailles, when the immense palace became plunged in darkness, when there could no longer be heard in the gardens aught but the tramp of the patrols upon the gravel-walks, and in the long passages nothing but the ringing of muskets on the marble pavement, Marie Antoinette, tired of repose, felt the want of air, got out of bed, and putting on her velvet slippers and a long white dressing-gown, went to the window to inhale the ascending freshness of the cascades, and to seize in their flight those counsels which the night winds murmur to heated minds and oppressed hearts.

Then she reviewed in her mind all the astounding events which this strange day had produced.

The fall of the Bastille, that visible emblem of royal power, the uncertainties of Charny, her devoted friend, that impassioned captive who for so many years had been

subjected to her yoke, and who during all those years had never breathed anything but love, now seemed for the first time to sigh from regret and feelings of remorse.

With that synthetic habit with which the knowledge of men and events endows great minds, Marie Antoinette immediately divided the agitation which oppressed her into two portions, the one being her political misfortunes, the other the sorrows of her heart.

The political misfortune was that great event, the news of which had left Paris at three o'clock in the afternoon, and was then spreading itself over the whole world, and weakening in every mind that sacred reverence which until then had always been accorded to kings, God's mandatories upon earth.

The sorrow of her heart was the gloomy resistance of Charny to the omnipotence of his well-beloved sovereign. It appeared to her like a presentiment that, without ceasing to be faithful and devoted, his love would cease to be blind, and might begin to argue with itself on its fidelity and its devotedness.

This thought grieved the queen's heart poignantly, and filled it with that bitter gall which is called jealousy, an acrid poison which ulcerates at the same instant a thousand little wounds in a wounded soul.

Nevertheless, grief in the presence of misfortune was logically of secondary importance.

Thus, rather from reasoning than from conscientious motives, rather from necessity than from instinct, Marie Antoinette first allowed her mind to enter into the grave reflections connected with the dangerous state of political affairs.

In which direction could she turn? Before her lay hatred and ambition, — weakness and indifference at her side.

For enemies she had people who, having commenced with calumny, were now organizing a rebellion, — people whom, consequently, no consideration would induce to retreat.

For defenders — we speak of the greater portion at least of those men who, little by little, had accustomed themselves to endure everything, and who, in consequence, no longer felt the depth of their wounds, their degradation — people who would hesitate to defend themselves, for fear of attracting attention.

It was therefore necessary to bury everything in oblivion, — to appear to forget, and yet to remember; to feign to forgive, and yet not pardon.

This would be conduct unworthy of a queen of France; it was especially unworthy of the daughter of Maria Theresa — that high-minded woman.

To resist! — to resist! — that was what offended royal pride most strenuously counselled. But was it prudent to resist? Could hatred be calmed down by shedding blood? Was it not terrible to be surnamed "The Austrian"? Was it necessary, in order to consecrate that name, as Isabeau and Catherine de Médicis consecrated theirs, to give it the baptism of a universal massacre?

And then, if what Charny had said was true, success was doubtful.

To combat and to be defeated!

Such were the political sorrows of the queen, who during certain phases of her meditation felt a sensation like that which we experience on seeing a serpent glide from beneath the brambles, awakened by our advancing steps. She felt, on emerging from the depths of her sufferings as a queen, the despair of the woman who thinks herself but little loved, when in reality she had been loved too much.

Charny had said what we have already heard him say,

not from conviction, but from lassitude. He had, like many others, drunk calumny from the same cup that she had. Charny, for the first time, had spoken in such affectionate terms of his wife, Andrée being until then almost forgotten by her husband. Had Charny then perceived that his young wife was still beautiful? And at this single idea, which stung her like the envenomed bite of the asp, Marie Antoinette was astounded to find that misfortune was nothing in comparison with disappointed love.

For what misfortune had failed to do, unrequited love was gradually effecting within her soul. The woman sprang furiously from the chair in which the queen had calmly contemplated danger.

The whole destiny of this privileged child of suffering revealed itself in the condition of her mind during that night.

For how was it possible to escape misfortune and disappointment at the same time, she would ask herself, with constantly renewing anguish. Was it necessary to determine on abandoning a life of royalty, and could she live happily in a state of mediocrity? — was it necessary to return to her own Trianon, and to her Swiss cottage, to the quiet shores of the lake and the humble amusements of the dairy? — was it necessary to allow the people to divide among them the shreds of monarchy, excepting some few fragments which the woman might appropriate to herself from the imaginary indebtedness of the faithful few, who would still persist in considering themselves her vassals?

Alas! it was now that the serpent of jealousy began to sting still deeper.

Happy! Could she be happy with the humiliation of despised love?

Happy! Could she be happy by the side of the king, — that vulgar husband in whom everything was deficient to form the hero?

Happy! Could she be happy with Monsieur de Charny, who might be so with some woman whom he loved, — by the side of his own wife, perhaps?

And this thought kindled in the poor queen's breast all those flaming torches which consumed Dido even more than her funeral pile.

But in the midst of this feverish torture, she saw a ray of hope; in the midst of this shuddering anguish, she felt a sensation of joy. God, in his infinite mercy, has he not created evil to make us appreciate good?

Andrée had intrusted the queen with all her secrets; she had unveiled the one shame of her life to her rival. Andrée, her eyes full of tears, her head bowed down to the ground, had confessed to the queen that she was no longer worthy of the love and the respect of an honorable man: therefore Charny could never love Andrée.

But Charny is ignorant of this. Charny will ever be ignorant of that catastrophe at Trianon, and its consequences. Therefore, to Charny it is as if the catastrophe had never taken place.

And while making these reflections the queen examined her fading beauty in the mirror of her mind, and deplored the loss of her gayety, the freshness of her youth.

Then she thought of Andrée, of the strange and almost incredible adventures which she had just related to her.

She wondered at the magical working of blind fortune, which had brought to Trianon, from the shade of a hut and the muddy furrows of a farm, a little gardener's boy, to associate his destinies with those of a highly born

young lady, who was herself associated with the destinies of a queen.

"Thus," said she to herself, "the atom which was thus lost in the lowest regions, has come, by a freak of superior attraction, to unite itself, like a fragment of a diamond, with the heavenly light of the stars."

This gardener's boy, this Gilbert, was he not a living symbol of that which was occurring at that moment, — a man of the people, rising from the lowness of his birth to busy himself with the politics of a great kingdom; a strange comedian, in whom were personified, by a privilege granted to him by the evil spirit who was then hovering over France, not only the insult offered to the nobility, but also the attack made upon the monarchy by a plebeian mob?

This Gilbert, now become a learned man, — this Gilbert, dressed in the black coat of the Tiers État, the counsellor of Monsieur de Necker, the confidant of the king of France, would now find himself, thanks to the Revolution, on an equal footing with the woman whose honor, like a thief, he had stolen in the night.

The queen had again become a woman, and shuddering in spite of herself at the sad story related by Andrée, she was endeavoring to study the character of this Gilbert, and to learn by herself to read in human features what God had placed there to indicate so strange a character; and notwithstanding the pleasure she had experienced on seeing the humiliation of her rival, she still felt a lingering desire to attack the man who had caused a woman such intensity of suffering.

Moreover, notwithstanding the terror generally inspired by the sight of monsters, she felt a desire to look at, and perhaps even to admire, this extraordinary man, who by a crime had infused his vile blood into the most aristo-

cratic veins in France, — this man who appeared to have organized the Revolution, in order that it should open the gates of the Bastille for him, in which, but for that Revolution, he would have remained immured forever, to teach him that a plebeian must remember nothing.

In consequence of this connecting link in her ideas, the queen reverted to her political vexations, and saw the responsibility of all she had suffered accumulate upon one single head.

Thus the author of the popular rebellion that had just shaken the royal power by levelling the Bastille was Gilbert, — he whose principles had placed weapons in the hands of the Billots, the Maillards, the Elies, and the Hullins.

Gilbert was therefore both a venomous and a terrible being, — venomous, because he had caused the loss of Andrée as a lover; terrible, because he had just assisted in overthrowing the Bastille as an enemy.

It was therefore necessary to know, in order to avoid him; or rather, to know him, in order to make use of him.

It was necessary, at any cost, to converse with this man, to examine him closely, and to judge him personally.

Two thirds of the night had already flown away, three o'clock was striking, and the first rays of the rising sun gilded the high tops of the trees in the park, and the summits of the statues of Versailles.

The queen had passed the whole night without sleeping; her eyes wandered vaguely up and down the avenues, where streaks of soft light began to appear.

A heavy and burning slumber gradually seized the unfortunate woman.

She fell back, with her neck overhanging the back of the arm-chair, near the open window.

She dreamed that she was walking in Trianon, and that

there appeared to her eyes, at the extremity of a flower-bed, a grinning gnome, similar to those we read of in German ballads; that this sardonic monster was Gilbert, who extended his hooked fingers towards her.

She screamed aloud.

Another cry answered hers.

That cry roused her from her slumber.

It was Madame de Tourzel who had uttered it. She had just entered the queen's apartment, and seeing her exhausted and gasping in an arm-chair, she could not avoid giving utterance to her grief and surprise.

"The queen is indisposed!" she exclaimed. "The queen is suffering. Shall I send for a physician?"

The queen opened her eyes. This question of Madame de Tourzel coincided with the demands of her own curiosity.

"Yes, a physician!" she replied; "Doctor Gilbert!—send for Doctor Gilbert!"

"Who is Doctor Gilbert?" asked Madame de Tourzel.

"A new physician, appointed by the king only yesterday, I believe, and just arrived from America."

"I know whom her Majesty means," said one of the queen's ladies-in-waiting.

"Well?" said the queen, inquiringly.

"Well, Madame, the doctor is in the king's antechamber."

"Do you know him, then?"

"Yes, your Majesty," stammered the woman.

"But how can you know him? He arrived here from America some eight or ten days ago, and only came out of the Bastille yesterday."

"I know him."

"Answer me distinctly. Where did you know him?" asked the queen, in an imperious tone.

The lady cast down her eyes.

"Come, will you make up your mind to tell me how it happens that you know this man?"

"Madame, I have read his works; and his works having given me a desire to see the author, I had him pointed out to me."

"Ah!" exclaimed the queen, with an indescribable look of haughtiness and reserve, — "ah! it is well. Since you know him, go and tell him that I am suffering, and that I wish to see him."

While waiting for the doctor's arrival, the queen made her ladies in attendance enter the room; after which she put on a dressing-gown and adjusted her hair.

CHAPTER II.

THE KING'S PHYSICIAN.

A FEW moments after the queen had expressed the above desire, — a desire which the person to whom it had been mentioned had complied with, — Gilbert, who felt astonished, slightly anxious, and profoundly agitated, but still without showing any external marks of it, presented himself to Marie Antoinette.

The firm and noble carriage, the delicate pallor of the man of science and of thought, to whom study had given a second nature, — a pallor still more enhanced by the black dress which was not only worn by all the deputies of the Tiers État, but also by those who had adopted the principles of the Revolution; the delicate white hand of the surgical operator, surrounded by a plain muslin wristband; his slender though well-formed limbs, which none of those at court could surpass in symmetry, even in the estimation of the connoisseurs of the Œil-de-Bœuf (combined with all these, there was a mixture of respectful timidity towards the woman, and of calm courage towards the patient, but no signs of servility towards her as a queen), — such were the plainly written signs that Marie Antoinette, with her aristocratic intelligence, could perceive in the countenance of Gilbert at the moment when the door opened to admit him into her bedchamber.

But the less Gilbert was provoking in his demeanor, the more did the queen feel her anger increase. She had figured him to herself as a type of an odious class of men;

she had considered him instinctively, though almost involuntarily, as one of those impudent heroes of whom she had so many around her. The author of the sufferings of Andrée, the bastard pupil of Rousseau, that miserable abortion who had grown up to manhood, that pruner of trees who had become a philosopher and a subduer of souls, — Marie Antoinette, in spite of herself, depicted him in her mind as having the features of Mirabeau; that is to say, of the man she most hated, after the Cardinal de Rohan and Lafayette.

It had seemed to her, before she saw Gilbert, that it required a gigantic physical development to contain so colossal a mind.

But when she saw a young, upright, and slender man, of elegant and graceful form, of sweet and amiable countenance, he appeared to her as having committed the new crime of belying himself by his exterior. Gilbert, a man of the people, of obscure and unknown birth! — Gilbert, the peasant, the clown, and the serf! — Gilbert was guilty, in the eyes of the queen, of having usurped the external appearance of a gentleman and a man of honor. The proud Austrian, the sworn enemy of lying and deception in others, became indignant, and immediately conceived a violent hatred for the unfortunate atom whom so many different motives combined to induce her to abhor.

For those who were intimate with her nature, for those who were accustomed to read in her eyes either serenity of temper or indications of an approaching storm, it was easy to discern that a tempest, full of thunder-claps and flashes of lightning, was raging in the depths of her heart.

But how was it possible for a human being, even a woman, to follow, in the midst of this hurricane of pas-

sions and anger, the succession of strange and contrasting feelings which clashed together in the queen's brain, and filled her breast with all the mortal poisons described by Homer!

The queen with a single look dismissed all her attendants, even Madame de Misery.

They immediately left the room.

The queen waited till the door had been closed on the last person; then, casting her eyes upon Gilbert, she perceived that he had not ceased to gaze at her.

So much audacity offended her. The doctor's look was apparently inoffensive; but as it was continual, and was full of meaning, it weighed so heavily upon her that Marie Antoinette felt compelled to repress its importunity.

"Well, then, sir," said she, with the abruptness of a pistol-shot, "what are you doing there, standing before me and gazing at me, instead of telling me with what complaint I am suffering?"

This furious apostrophe, rendered more forcible by the flashing of her eyes, would have annihilated any of the queen's courtiers; it would even have compelled a marshal of France, a hero, or a demi-god, to fall on his knees before her.

But Gilbert tranquilly replied: —

"It is by means of the eyes, Madame, that the physician must first examine his patient. By looking at your Majesty, who sent for me, I do not satisfy an idle curiosity; I exercise my profession: I obey your orders."

"Then you must have studied me sufficiently."

"As much as lay in my power, Madame."

"Am I ill?"

"Not in the strict sense of the word. But your Majesty is suffering from great over-excitement."

"Ah! ah!" said Marie Antoinette, ironically, "why do you not say at once that I am in a passion?"

"Let your Majesty allow me, since you have ordered the attendance of a physician, to express myself in medical terms."

"Be it so. But what is the cause of my over-excitement?"

"Your Majesty has too much knowledge not to be aware that the physician discovers the sufferings of the body, thanks to his experience and the traditions of his studies; but he is not a sorcerer, who can discover at first sight the depths of the human soul."

"By this you mean to imply, that the second or third time you could tell me not only from what I am suffering, but also what are my thoughts?"

"Perhaps so, Madame," coldly replied Gilbert.

The queen appeared to tremble with anger: her words seemed to be hanging on her lips, ready to burst forth in burning torrents.

She, however, restrained herself.

"I must believe you," said she,—"you who are a learned man."

And she emphasized these last words with so much contempt, that the eye of Gilbert appeared to kindle, in its turn, with the fire of anger.

But a struggle of a few seconds' duration sufficed to this man to give him a complete victory.

Accordingly, with a calm brow and an unembarrassed expression he almost immediately rejoined:—

"It is too kind of your Majesty to give me the title of a learned man without having received any proofs of my knowledge."

The queen bit her lip.

"You must understand that I do not know if you are

a scientific man," she replied; "but I have heard it said, and I repeat what everybody says."

"Well, then," said Gilbert, respectfully, and bowing still lower than he had done hitherto, "a superior mind, like that of your Majesty, must not blindly repeat what is said by the vulgar."

"Do you mean the people?" said the queen, insolently.

"The vulgar, Madame," repeated Gilbert, with a firmness which made the blood thrill in the queen's veins, and gave rise to emotions which were as painful to her as they had hitherto been unknown.

"In fine," answered she, "let us not discuss that point. You are said to be learned; that is all that is essential. Where have you studied?"

"Everywhere, Madame."

"That is not an answer."

"Nowhere, then."

"I prefer that answer. Have you studied nowhere?"

"As it may please you, Madame," replied the doctor, bowing, "and yet it is less exact than to say everywhere."

"Come, answer me, then!" exclaimed the queen, becoming exasperated; "and above all, for Heaven's sake, Monsieur Gilbert, spare me such phrases."

Then, as if speaking to herself:—

"Everywhere! everywhere! what does that mean? It is the language of a charlatan, a quack, of a physician who practises in the public squares! Do you mean to overawe me by your sonorous syllables?"

She stepped forward with ardent eyes and quivering lips.

"Everywhere! Mention some place; come, explain your meaning, Monsieur Gilbert."

"I said everywhere," answered Gilbert, coldly, "be

cause in fact I have studied everywhere, Madame, — in the hut and in the palace, in cities and in the desert, upon our own species and upon animals, upon myself and upon others, in a manner suitable to one who loves knowledge, and studies it where it is to be found, that is to say, everywhere."

The queen, overcome, cast a terrible glance at Gilbert, while he, on his part, was eying her with terrible perseverance. She became convulsively agitated, and turning round, upset a small stand, upon which her chocolate had been served in a cup of Sèvres porcelain. Gilbert saw the table fall, saw the broken cup, but did not move a finger.

The color mounted to the cheeks of Marie Antoinette; she raised her cold, moist hand to her burning temples, but did not dare to raise her eyes again to look at Gilbert.

But her features assumed a more contemptuous, more insolent expression than before.

"Then, under what great master did you study?" continued the queen, again taking up the conversation at the point where she had left it off.

"I hardly know how to answer your Majesty, without running the risk of again wounding you."

The queen perceived the advantage that Gilbert had given her, and threw herself upon it like a lioness upon her prey.

"Wound me — you wound me — you!" exclaimed she. "Oh, sir, what are you saying there? You wound a queen! You are mistaken, sir, I can affirm to you. Ah, Doctor Gilbert, you have not studied the French language in as good schools as you have studied medicine. People of my station are not to be wounded, Doctor Gilbert. You may weary them, that is all."

Gilbert bowed, and made a step towards the door; but it was not possible for the queen to discover in his countenance the least show of anger, the least sign of impatience.

The queen, on the contrary, was stamping her feet with rage; she sprang towards Gilbert, as if to prevent him from leaving the room.

He understood her.

"Pardon me, Madame," said he. "It is true I committed the unpardonable error to forget that, as a physician, I was called to see a patient. Forgive me, Madame; hereafter I shall remember it."

He reflected for a moment.

"Your Majesty," continued he, "is rapidly approaching a nervous crisis. I will venture to ask you not to give way to it; for in a short time it would be beyond your power to control it. At this moment your pulse must be imperceptible, the blood is rushing to the heart; your Majesty is suffering, your Majesty is almost suffocating, and perhaps it would be prudent for you to summon one of your ladies-in-waiting."

The queen took a turn round the room, and seating herself: —

"Is your name Gilbert?" asked she.

"Yes, Gilbert, Madame."

"Strange! I remember an incident of my youth, the strange nature of which would doubtless *wound* you much, were I to relate it to you. But it matters not; for if hurt, you will soon cure yourself, — you, who are no less a philosopher than a learned physician."

And the queen smiled ironically.

"Precisely so, Madame," said Gilbert; "you may smile, and little by little subdue your nervousness by irony. It is one of the most beautiful prerogatives of the

intelligent will to be able thus to control itself. Subdue it, Madame, subdue it; but, however, without making a too violent effort."

This prescription of the physician was given with so much suavity and such natural good-humor, that the queen, while feeling the bitter irony contained in his words, could not take offence at what Gilbert had said to her.

She merely returned to the charge, recommencing her attack where she had discontinued it.

"This incident of which I spoke," continued she, "is the following."

Gilbert bowed, as a sign that he was listening.

The queen made an effort, and fixed her gaze upon him.

"I was the dauphiness at that time, and I inhabited Trianon. There was in the gardens a little dark-looking, dirty boy, covered with mud, a crabbed boy, a sort of sour Jean Jacques, who weeded, dug, and picked off the caterpillars with his little crooked fingers. His name was Gilbert."

"It was myself, Madame," said Gilbert, phlegmatically.

"You!" said Marie Antoinette, with an expression of hatred. "I was, then, right! but you are not, then, a learned man?"

"I think that, as your Majesty's memory is so good, you must also remember dates," rejoined Gilbert. "It was in 1772, if I am not mistaken, that the little gardener's boy, of whom your Majesty speaks, weeded the flower-beds of Trianon to earn his bread. We are now in 1789. It is therefore seventeen years, Madame, since the events to which you allude took place. It is more time than is necessary to metamorphose a savage into a learned man; the soul and the mind operate quickly in certain

positions, like plants and flowers, which grow rapidly in hothouses. Revolutions, Madame, are the hotbeds of the mind. Your Majesty looks at me, and, notwithstanding the perspicacity of your scrutiny, you do not perceive that the boy of sixteen has become a man of thirty-three; you are therefore wrong to wonder that the ignorant, the ingenuous little Gilbert, should, after having witnessed these revolutions, have become a learned man and a philosopher."

"Ignorant! be it so; but ingenuous, — ingenuous, did you say?" furiously cried the queen. "I think you called that little Gilbert ingenuous."

"If I am mistaken, Madame, or if I praised this little boy for a quality which he did not possess, I do not know how your Majesty can have ascertained more correctly than myself that he had the opposite defect."

"Oh, that is quite another matter!" said the queen, gloomily; "perhaps we shall speak of that some other time; but, in the mean time, let me speak of the learned man, of the man brought to perfection, of the perfect man I see before me."

Gilbert did not take up the word "perfect." He understood but too well that it was a new insult.

"Let us return to our subject, Madame," replied Gilbert. "Tell me for what purpose did your Majesty order me to come to your apartment?"

"You propose to become the king's physician," said she. "Now, you must understand, sir, that I attach too much importance to the health of my husband to trust it in the hands of a man whom I do not know perfectly."

"I offered myself to the king, Madame," said Gilbert, "and I was accepted without your Majesty having any just cause to conceive the least suspicion as to my capacity

or want of zeal. I am, above all, a political physician, Madame, recommended by Monsieur Necker. As for the rest, if the king is ever in want of my science, I shall prove myself a good physical doctor, so far as human science can be of use to the Creator's works. But what I shall be to the king more particularly, besides being a good adviser and a good physician, is a good friend."

"A good friend!" exclaimed the queen, with a fresh outburst of contempt. "You, sir, a friend of the king!"

"Certainly," replied Gilbert, quietly; "why not, Madame?"

"Oh yes! all in virtue of your secret power, by the assistance of your occult science," murmured she; "who can tell? We have already seen the Jacqueses and the Maillotins; perhaps we shall go back to the dark ages! You have resuscitated philters and charms. You will soon govern France by magic; you will be a Faust or a Nicholas Flamel!"

"I have no such pretensions, Madame."

"And why have you not, sir? How many monsters more cruel than those of the gardens of Armida, more cruel than Cerberus himself, would you not put to sleep on the threshold of our hell!"

When she had pronounced the words, "would you not put to sleep," the queen cast a scrutinizing look on the doctor.

This time Gilbert blushed in spite of himself.

It was a source of indescribable joy to Marie Antoinette; she felt that this time the blow she had struck had inflicted a real wound.

"For you have the power of causing sleep; you, who have studied everything and everywhere, you doubtless have studied magnetic science with the magnetizers

of our century, who make sleep a treacherous instrument, and who read their secrets in the sleep of others."

"In fact, Madame, I have often, and for a long time, studied under the learned Cagliostro."

"Yes; he who practised and made his followers practise that moral theft of which I was just speaking; the same who, by the aid of that magic sleep which I call infamous, robbed some of their souls, and others of their bodies!"

Gilbert again understood her meaning, but this time he turned pale, instead of reddening. The queen trembled with joy, to the very depths of her heart.

"Ah, wretch!" murmured she to herself: "I have wounded you, and I can see the blood."

But the profoundest emotions were never visible for any length of time on the countenance of Gilbert. Approaching the queen, therefore, who, quite joyful on account of her victory, was imprudently looking at him: —

"Madame," said he, "your Majesty would be wrong to deny the learned men of whom you have been speaking the most beautiful appendage to their science, which is the power of throwing, not victims, but *subjects*, into a magnetic sleep; you would be wrong, in particular, to contest the right they have to follow up, by all possible means, a discovery of which the laws, once recognized and regulated, are perhaps intended to revolutionize the world."

And while approaching the queen, Gilbert had looked at her, in his turn, with that power of will to which the nervous Andrée had succumbed.

The queen felt a chill run through her veins as he drew nearer to her.

"Infamy," said she, "be the reward of those men who

make an abuse of certain dark and mysterious arts to ruin both the soul and body. May infamy rest upon the head of Cagliostro!"

"Ah!" replied Gilbert, with the accent of conviction, "beware, Madame, of judging the faults committed by human beings with so much severity."

"Sir —"

"Every one is liable to err, Madame; all human beings commit injuries on their fellow-creatures, and were it not for individual egotism, which is the foundation of general safety, the world would become but one great battle-field. Those are the best who are good; that is all. Others will tell you that those are best who are the least faulty. Indulgence must be the greater, Madame, in proportion to the elevated rank of the judge. Seated as you are on so exalted a throne, you have less right than any other person to be severe towards the faults of others. On your worldly throne, you should be supremely indulgent, like God, who upon his heavenly throne is supremely merciful."

"Sir," said the queen, "I view my rights in a different light from you, and especially my duties. I am on the throne to punish or reward."

"I do not think so, Madame. In my opinion, on the contrary, you are seated on the throne, — you, a woman and a queen, to conciliate and to forgive."

"I suppose you are not moralizing, sir."

"You are right, Madame, and I was only replying to your Majesty. This Cagliostro, for instance, Madame, of whom you were speaking a few moments since, and whose science you were contesting, I remember, — and this is a remembrance of something anterior to your recollections of Trianon, — I remember that in the gardens of the Château de Taverney he had occasion to give

the dauphiness of France a proof of his science; I know not what it was, Madame, but you must recollect it well, for that proof made a profound impression upon her, even so much as to cause her to faint."

Gilbert was now striking blows in his turn; it is true that he was dealing them at random, but he was favored by chance, and they hit the mark so truly, that the queen became pale.

"Yes," said she, in a hoarse voice, "yes, he made me see, as in a dream, a hideous machine; but I know not that, up to the present time, such a machine has ever really existed."

"I know not what he made you see, Madame," rejoined Gilbert, who felt satisfied with the effect he had produced; "but I do know that it is impossible to dispute the appellation of 'learned' to a man who wields such a power as that over his fellow-creatures."

"His fellow-creatures," murmured the queen, disdainfully.

"Be it so, — I am mistaken," replied Gilbert; "and his power is so much the more wonderful, that it reduces to a level with himself, under the yoke of fear, the heads of monarchs and princes of the earth."

"Infamy, infamy, I say again, upon those who take advantage of the weakness or the credulity of others!"

"Infamous! did you call infamous those who make use of science?"

"Their science is nothing but chimeras, lies, and cowardice."

"What mean you by that, Madame?" asked Gilbert, calmly.

"My meaning is, that this Cagliostro is a cowardly mountebank, and that his pretended magnetic sleep is a crime."

"A crime!"

"Yes, a crime," continued the queen; "for it is the result of some potion, some philter, some poison; and human justice, which I represent, will be able to discover the mystery, and punish the inventor."

"Madame, Madame," rejoined Gilbert, with the same patience as before, "a little indulgence, I beg, for those who have erred."

"Ah! you confess their guilt, then?"

The queen was mistaken, and thought from the mild tone of Gilbert's voice, that he was supplicating pardon for himself.

She was in error, and Gilbert did not allow the advantage she had thus given him to escape.

"What?" said he, dilating his flashing eyes, before the gaze of which Marie Antoinette was compelled to lower hers, as if suddenly dazzled by the rays of the sun.

The queen remained confounded for a moment, and then, making an effort to speak:—

"A queen can no more be questioned than she can be wounded," said she: "learn to know that also, you who have but so newly arrived at court. But you were speaking, it seems to me, of those who have erred, and you asked me to be indulgent towards them."

"Alas! Madame," said Gilbert, "where is the human creature who is not liable to reproach? Is it he who has ensconced himself so closely within the deep shell of his conscience that the look of others cannot penetrate it? It is this which is often denominated virtue. Be indulgent, Madame."

"But according to this opinion, then," replied the queen, imprudently, "there is no virtuous being in your estimation, sir,—you, who are the pupil of those men

whose prying eyes seek the truth, even in the deepest recesses of the human conscience."

"It is true, Madame."

She laughed, and without seeking to conceal the contempt which her laughter expressed.

"Oh, pray, sir," exclaimed she, "do remember that you are not now speaking on a public square, to idiots, to peasants, or to patriots."

"I am aware to whom I am speaking, Madame; of this you may be fully persuaded," replied Gilbert.

"Show more respect then, sir, or more adroitness; consider your past life; search the depths of that conscience which men who have studied everywhere must possess in common with the rest of mankind, notwithstanding their genius and their wisdom; recall to your mind all that you may have conceived that was vile, hurtful, and criminal, — all the cruelties, the deeds, the crimes even, you have committed. Do not interrupt me; and when you have summed up all your misdeeds, learned doctor, you will bow down your head, and become more humble. Do not approach the dwelling of kings with such insolent pride, who, until there is a new order of things, were established by Heaven to penetrate the souls of criminals, to examine the folds of the human conscience, and to inflict chastisement upon the guilty, without pity and without appeal.

"That, sir," continued the queen, "is what you ought to do. You will be thought the better of, on account of your repentance. Believe me, the best mode of healing a soul so diseased as yours, would be to live in solitude, far from the grandeurs which give men false ideas of their own worth. I would advise you, therefore, not to approach the court, and to abandon the idea of attending the king during sickness. You have a cure to accom-

plish, for which God will esteem you more than for any other, — the cure of yourself. Antiquity had a proverb, which expressed the following maxim, sir : *Medice, cura teipsum.*"

Gilbert, instead of being irritated at this proposal, which the queen considered as the most disagreeable of conclusions, replied with gentleness : —

"Madame, I have already done all that your Majesty advises."

"And what have you done, sir?"

"I have meditated."

"Upon yourself?"

"Yes, upon myself, Madame."

"And in regard to your conscience?"

"Especially on the subject of my conscience, Madame."

"Do you think, then, I am sufficiently well informed of what you saw in it?"

"I do not know what your Majesty means by those words, but I think I can discover their meaning, which is, 'how many times a man of my age must have offended God!'"

"Really — you speak of God?"

"Yes."

"You?"

"Why not?"

"A philosopher, — do philosophers believe in the existence of a God?"

"I speak of God, and I believe in him."

"And you are still determined not to withdraw from court?"

"No, Madame, I remain."

"Monsieur Gilbert, take heed."

And the queen's countenance assumed a threatening expression, which it would be impossible to describe.

"Oh, I have reflected much upon the subject, Madame, and my reflections have led me to know that I am not less worthy than another; every one has his faults. I learned this axiom not by pondering over books, but by searching the consciences of others."

"You are universal and infallible, are you not?" said the queen, ironically.

"Alas, Madame, if I am not universal, if I am not infallible, I am nevertheless very learned in human misery, well versed in the greatest sorrows of the mind. And this is so true, that I could tell, by merely seeing the livid circle round your wearied eyes, by merely seeing the line which extends from one eyebrow to the other, by merely seeing at the corners of your mouth a contraction which is called by the prosaic name of wrinkle, — I can tell you, Madame, how many severe trials you have undergone, how many times your heart has palpitated with anguish, to how many secret dreams of joy your heart has abandoned itself, to discover its error on awaking.

"I will tell you all that, Madame, when you shall desire it; I will tell it you, for I am sure of not being contradicted. I will tell it you, by merely fastening upon you a gaze which can read and wishes to read your mind; and when you have felt the power of that gaze, when you have felt the weight of this curiosity sounding to your inmost soul, like the sea that feels the weight of the lead that plunges into its depths, then you will understand that I am able to do much, Madame, and that if I pause awhile, you should be grateful to me for it, instead of provoking me on to war."

This language, supported by a terrible fixity of the will of provocation, exercised by the man upon the woman, this contempt for all etiquette in presence of

the queen, produced an unspeakable effect upon Marie Antoinette.

She felt as if a mist were overshadowing her brow, and sending an icy chill through her ideas: she felt her hatred turning into fear; and letting her hands fall heavily by her side, retreated a step to avoid the approach of the unknown danger.

"And now, Madame," said Gilbert, who clearly perceived all that was passing in her mind, "do you understand that it would be very easy for me to discover that which you conceal from everybody, and that which you conceal even from yourself; do you understand that it would be easy for me to stretch you on that chair, which your fingers are now instinctively seeking as a support?"

"Ah!" exclaimed the queen, who was terrified, for she felt an unknown chill invading even her heart.

"Were I but to utter to myself a word which I will not utter," continued Gilbert, "were I but to summon up my will, which I renounce, you would fall as if thunderstricken into my power. You doubt what I am telling you, Madame. Oh, do not doubt it; you might perhaps tempt me once, — and if once you tempted me! But no, you do not doubt it, do you?"

The queen, almost on the point of falling, exhausted, oppressed, and completely lost, grasped the back of her arm-chair with all the energy of despair and the rage of useless resistance.

"Oh," continued Gilbert, "mark this well, Madame: it is that if I were not the most respectful, the most devoted, the most humble of your subjects, I should convince you by a terrible experiment. Oh, you need fear nothing. I prostrate myself humbly before the woman rather than before the queen. I tremble at the idea of

entertaining any project which might, even in the slightest way, inquire into your thoughts; I would rather kill myself than disturb your soul."

"Sir! sir!" exclaimed the queen, striking the air with her arms, as if to repel Gilbert, who was standing more than three paces from her.

"And still," continued Gilbert, "you caused me to be thrown into the Bastille. You only regret that it is taken, because the people, by taking it, reopened its gates for me. There is hatred visible in your eyes towards a man against whom personally you can have no cause of reproach. And see, now, I feel that since I have lessened the influence by means of which I have controlled you, you are perhaps resuming your doubts with your returning respiration."

In fact, since Gilbert had ceased to control her with his eyes and gestures, Marie Antoinette had reassumed her threatening attitude, like the bird which, being freed from the suffocating influence of the air-pump, endeavors to regain its song and its power of wing.

"Ah! you still doubt; you are ironical; you despise my warnings. Well, then, do you wish me to tell you, Madame, a terrible idea that has just crossed my mind? This is what I was on the point of doing. Madame, I was just about to compel you to reveal to me your most intimate troubles, your most hidden secrets. I thought of compelling you to write them down on the table which you touch at this moment, and afterwards, when you had awakened and come to your senses again, I should have convinced you by your own writing of the existence of that power which you seem to contest; and also how real is the forbearance, and shall I say it, — yes, I will say it, — the generosity of the man whom you have just insulted, whom you have insulted

for a whole hour, without his having for a single instant given you either a reason or a pretext for so doing."

"Compel me to sleep! — compel me to speak in my sleep! — me! — me!" exclaimed the queen, turning quite pale: "would you have dared to do it, sir? But do you know what that is? Do you know the grave nature of the threat you make? Why, it is the crime of high treason, sir. Consider it well. It is a crime which, after awakening from my sleep, I should have punished with death."

"Madame," said Gilbert, watching the feverish emotions of the queen, "be not so hasty in accusing, and especially in threatening. Certainly I should have possessed myself of all your secrets; but be convinced that it would not have been on an occasion like this; it would not have been during an interview between the queen and her subject, between a woman and a stranger. No: I should have put the queen to sleep, it is true, — and nothing would have been easier, — but I should not have ventured to put her to sleep, I should not have allowed myself to speak to her, without having a witness."

"A witness?"

"Yes, Madame, a witness who would faithfully note all your words, all your gestures, all the details, in short, of the scene which I should have brought about, in order that, after its termination, you could not doubt for a single moment longer."

"A witness, sir!" repeated the queen, terrified; "and who would that witness have been? But consider it maturely, sir, your crime would then have been doubled, for in that case you would have had an accomplice."

"And if this accomplice, Madame, had been none other than the king?" said Gilbert.

"The king!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette, with an expression of fear that betrayed the wife more energetically than the confession of the somnambulist could have done. "Oh, Monsieur Gilbert! —Monsieur Gilbert!"

"The king," continued Gilbert, calmly, — "the king is your husband, your supporter, your natural defender. The king would have related to you, when you were awakened from your slumber, how respectful and proud I was in being able to prove my science to the most revered of sovereigns."

And after having spoken these words, Gilbert allowed her Majesty sufficient time to meditate upon their importance.

The queen remained silent for several minutes, during which nothing was heard but the noise of her agitated breathing.

"Sir," replied she, after this pause, "from all that you have now told me, you must be a mortal enemy — "

"Or a devoted friend, Madame?"

"It is impossible, sir; friendship cannot exist in unison with fear or mistrust."

"The friendship, Madame, that exists between a subject and a queen cannot subsist except by the confidence which the subject may inspire her with. You will already have said to yourself that he is not an enemy whom, after the first word, we can deprive of the means of doing harm, especially when he is the first to denounce the use of his weapons."

"May I believe, sir, what you have been saying?" said the queen, looking thoughtfully at Gilbert.

"Why should you not believe me, Madame, when you have every proof of my sincerity?"

"Men change, sir, — men change."

"Madame, I have made the same vow that certain

illustrious warriors made, before starting on an expedition, as to the use of certain weapons in which they were skilled. I shall never make use of my advantages but to repel the wrong that others may attempt to do me. *Not for offence, but for defence.* That is my motto."

"Alas!" said the queen, feeling humbled.

"I understand you, Madame. You suffer because you see your soul in the hands of a physician, — you who rebelled at times against the idea of abandoning the care of your body to him. Take courage; be confident. He wishes to advise you well who has this day given you proof of such forbearance as that you have received from me. I desire to love you, Madame; I desire that you should be beloved by all. The ideas I have already submitted to the king I will discuss with you."

"Doctor, take care!" exclaimed the queen, gravely. "You caught me in your snare; after having terrified the woman, you think to control the queen."

"No, Madame," answered Gilbert, "I am not a contemptible speculator. I have ideas of my own, and I can conceive that you have yours. I must from this very moment repel this accusation — one that you would forever make against me — that I had intimidated you in order to subjugate your reason. I will say more, that you are the first woman in whom I have found united all the passions of a woman and all the commanding qualities of a man. You may be at the same time a woman and a friend. All humanity might be concentred in you, were it necessary. I admire you, and I will serve you. I will serve you without any remuneration from you, merely for the sake of studying you, Madame. I will do still more for your service. In case I should seem to be a too inconvenient piece of palace furniture, or if the impression made by the scene of to-day

should not be effaced from your memory, I shall ask you, I shall pray you, to dismiss me."

"Dismiss you!" exclaimed the queen, with a joyful air that did not escape Gilbert.

"Well, then, it is agreed, Madame," replied he, with admirable presence of mind. "I shall not even tell the king what I had intended, and I shall depart. Must I go to a great distance to reassure you, Madame?"

She looked at him, and appeared surprised at so much self-denial.

"I perceive," said he, "what your Majesty thinks. Your Majesty, who is better acquainted than is generally thought with the mysteries of the magnetic influence which so much alarmed you a few minutes since, — your Majesty says to herself that at a distance from her I shall be no less dangerous and troublesome."

"How is that?" exclaimed the queen.

"Yes, I repeat it, Madame. He who would be hurtful to any one by the means you have reproached my masters and myself for employing, could practise his hurtful power equally well were the distance a hundred leagues, as at three paces. Fear nothing, Madame. I shall not attempt it."

The queen remained thoughtful for a moment, not knowing how to answer this extraordinary man, who made her waver even after she had formed the firmest resolutions.

On a sudden, the noise of steps coming from the end of the gallery made Marie Antoinette raise her head.

"The king," said she, — "the king is coming."

"In that case, Madame, answer me, I pray you — shall I remain here, or shall I leave you?"

"But —"

"Make haste, Madame. I can avoid seeing the king,

if you desire it. Your Majesty may show me a door by which I can withdraw."

"Remain!" said the queen to him.

Gilbert bowed courteously, while Marie Antoinette endeavored to read in his features to what extent triumph would reveal more than either anger or anxiety.

Gilbert remained perfectly impassible.

"At least," said the queen to herself, "he ought to have manifested some slight satisfaction."

CHAPTER III.

THE COUNCIL.

THE king entered the room quickly and heavily, as was his custom. He had a busy, inquisitive air, that contrasted strangely with the icy rigidity of the queen's demeanor.

The fresh complexion of the king had not abandoned him. Having risen early, and feeling quite proud of the sound health he enjoyed by inhaling the morning air, he was breathing noisily, and stepped out vigorously on the floor.

"The doctor," said he, — "what has become of the doctor?"

"Good-morning, Sire. How do you do this morning? Do you feel much fatigued?"

"I have slept six hours: that is my allowance. I am very well. My mind is clear. You look rather pale, Madame. I was told that you had sent for the doctor."

"Here is Doctor Gilbert," said the queen, stepping from before the recess of a window, in which the doctor had concealed himself till that moment.

The king's brow at once cleared up. Then: —

"Ah! I forgot," said he. "You sent for the doctor. Have you been unwell?"

The queen blushed.

"You blush!" exclaimed Louis XVI.

She turned crimson.

"Another secret," said the king.

"What secret, Sire?" exclaimed the queen, haughtily.

"You do not understand me. I tell you that you, who have your own favorite physicians, — you would not have sent for Doctor Gilbert, unless you felt the desire, which I know —"

"What desire?"

"You always have to conceal your sufferings from me."

"Ah!" exclaimed the queen, regaining courage.

"Yes," continued Louis XVI., "but take good care. Monsieur Gilbert is one of my confidential friends; and if you tell him anything he will be sure to tell it me."

Gilbert smiled.

"As for that, no, Sire," said he.

"Well, then, the queen is corrupting my people!"

Marie Antoinette gave one of those little stifled laughs which imply merely a wish to interrupt a conversation, or that the conversation is very tedious.

Gilbert understood her; but the king did not.

"Let us see, doctor," said he; "as it seems to amuse the queen, tell me what she has been saying to you."

"I was asking the doctor," said Marie Antoinette, in her turn, "why you had sent for him so early. I must, indeed, confess that his presence at Versailles at so unusual an hour perplexes me and makes me uneasy."

"I was waiting for the doctor," replied the king, looking gloomy, "to speak on politics with him."

"Ah! very well," said the queen.

And she seated herself as if to listen.

"Come, Doctor," rejoined the king, taking a step towards the door.

Gilbert made a profound bow to the queen, and was about to follow Louis XVI.

"Where are you going?" exclaimed the queen. "What! are you going to leave me?"

"We are not going to talk on gay subjects, Madame. It would be as well for us to spare you so much care."

"Do you call my sorrow care?" exclaimed the queen, majestically.

"A still better reason for doing so, my dear."

"Remain here; I wish it," said she. "Monsieur Gilbert, I imagine you will not disobey me."

"Monsieur Gilbert! Monsieur Gilbert!" exclaimed the king, much vexed.

"Well, then, what is the matter?"

"Why, Monsieur Gilbert, who was to give me some advice, who was to talk freely to me according to his conscience, — Monsieur Gilbert will now no longer do so."

"And why not?" exclaimed the queen.

"Because you will be present, Madame."

Gilbert made a sort of gesture, to which the queen immediately attributed some important meaning.

"In what manner," said she, to second it, "will Monsieur Gilbert risk displeasing me, if he speaks according to his conscience?"

"It is easily understood, Madame," said the king. "You have a political system of your own. It is not always ours; so that —"

"So that Monsieur Gilbert, you clearly say, differs essentially from me in my line of politics."

"That must be the case, Madame," replied Gilbert, "judging from the ideas which your Majesty knows me to entertain. Only your Majesty may rest assured that I shall tell the truth as freely in your presence as to the king alone."

"Ah! that is already something," exclaimed Marie Antoinette.

"The truth is not always agreeable," hastily murmured Louis XVI.

"But if it is useful?" observed Gilbert.

"Or even uttered with good intention," added the queen.

"In that view of the case, I agree with you," interposed Louis XVI. "But if you were wise, Madame, you would leave the doctor entire freedom of speech, and which I need —"

"Sire," replied Gilbert, "since the queen herself calls for the truth, and as I know her Majesty's mind is sufficiently noble and powerful not to fear it, I prefer to speak in presence of both my sovereigns."

"Sire," said the queen, "I request it."

"I have full faith in your Majesty's good sense," said Gilbert, bowing to the queen. "The subject is the happiness and glory of his Majesty the king."

"You are right to put faith in me," said the queen. "Begin, sir."

"All this is very well," continued the king, who was growing obstinate, according to his custom; "but, in short, the question is a delicate one; and I know well that, as to myself, you will greatly embarrass me by being present."

The queen could not withhold a gesture of impatience. She rose, then seated herself again, and darted a penetrating and cold look at the doctor, as if to divine his thoughts.

Louis XVI., seeing that there was no longer any means of escaping the ordinary and extraordinary inquisitorial question, seated himself in his arm-chair, opposite Gilbert, and heaved a deep sigh.

"What is the point in question?" asked the queen, as soon as this singular species of council had been thus constituted and installed.

Gilbert looked at the king once more, as if to ask him for his authority to speak openly.

"Speak! Good Heavens, go on, sir, since the queen desires it."

"Well, then, Madame," said the doctor, "I will inform your Majesty in a few words of the object of my early visit to Versailles. I came to advise his Majesty to proceed to Paris."

Had a spark fallen among the eight thousand pounds of gunpowder at the Hôtel de Ville, it could not have produced the explosion which those words caused in the queen's heart.

"The king proceed to Paris! The king! — ah!" and she uttered a cry of horror that made Louis XVI. tremble.

"There!" exclaimed the king, looking at Gilbert; "what did I tell you, Doctor?"

"The king!" continued the queen; "the king in the midst of a revolted city! — the king amidst pitchforks and scythes! — the king among the men who massacred the Swiss, and who assassinated Monsieur de Launay and Monsieur de Flesselles! — the king crossing the square of the Hôtel de Ville, and treading in the blood of his defenders! You must be deprived of your senses, sir, to speak thus. Oh, I repeat it; you are mad!"

Gilbert lowered his eyes like a man who is restrained by feelings of respect; but he did not answer a single word.

The king, who felt agitated to the bottom of his soul, turned about in his seat like a man undergoing torture on the gridiron of the Inquisition.

"Is it possible," continued the queen, "that such an idea should have found a place in an intelligent mind, — in a French heart? What, sir? Do you not, then, know that you are speaking to the successor of St. Louis, — to the great-grandson of Louis XIV.?"

The king was beating the carpet with his feet.

"I do not suppose, however," continued the queen, "that you desire to deprive the king of the assistance of his guards and his army, or that you are seeking to draw him out of his palace, which is a fortress, to expose him alone and defenceless to the blows of his infuriated enemies; you do not wish to see the king assassinated, I suppose, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"If I thought that your Majesty for a single moment entertained an idea that I am capable of such treachery, I should not be merely a madman, but should look upon myself as a wretch. But Heaven be thanked, Madame! you do not believe it any more than I do. No; I came to give my king this counsel, because I think the counsel good, and even superior to any other."

The queen clinched her hand upon her breast with so much violence as to make the cambric crack beneath its pressure.

The king shrugged up his shoulders with a slight movement of impatience.

"But for Heaven's sake!" cried he, "listen to him, Madame; there will be time enough to say no when you have heard him."

"The king is right, Madame," said Gilbert, "for you do not know what I have to tell your Majesties. You think yourself surrounded by an army which is firm, devoted to your cause, and ready to die for you; it is an error. Of the French regiments, one half are conspiring with the regenerators to carry out their revolutionary ideas."

"Sir," exclaimed the queen, "beware! You are insulting the army!"

"On the contrary, Madame," said Gilbert, "I am its greatest eulogist. We may respect our queen and be

devoted to the king, and still love our country and devote ourselves to liberty."

The queen cast a flaming look, like a flash of lightning, at Gilbert. "Sir," said she to him, "this language — "

"Yes, this language offends you, Madame. I can readily understand that; for, according to all probability, your Majesty hears it now for the first time."

"We must, nevertheless, accustom ourselves to it," muttered Louis XVI., with the submissive good sense that constituted his chief strength.

"Never!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette, "never!"

"Let us see; listen! listen! I think what the doctor says is full of reason."

The queen sat down, trembling with rage.

Gilbert continued: —

"I was going to say, Madame, that I have seen Paris, ay, and that you have not even seen Versailles. Do you know what Paris wishes to do at this moment?"

"No," said the king, anxiously.

"Perhaps it does not wish to take the Bastille a second time," said the queen, contemptuously.

"Assuredly not, Madame," continued Gilbert; "but Paris knows that there is another fortress between the people and their sovereign. Paris proposes to assemble the deputies of the forty-eight districts of which it is composed, and send them to Versailles."

"Let them come! let them come!" exclaimed the queen, in a tone of ferocious joy. "Oh, they will be well received here!"

"Wait, Madame," replied Gilbert, "and beware; these deputies will not come alone."

"And with whom will they come?"

"They will come supported by twenty thousand National Guards."

"National Guards!" said the queen, "what are they?"

"Ah! Madame, do not speak lightly of that body; it will some day become a power; it will bind and loosen."

"Twenty thousand men!" exclaimed the king.

"Well, sir," replied the queen, in her turn, "you have here ten thousand men that are worth a hundred thousand rebels; call them, call them, I tell you; the twenty thousand wretches will here find their punishment, and the example needed by all this revolutionary slime which I would sweep away, ay, in a week, were I but listened to for an hour."

Gilbert shook his head sorrowfully.

"Oh, Madame," said he, "how you deceive yourself, or rather how you have been deceived! Alas! alas! Have you reflected on it? — a civil war, provoked by a queen. One only has done this, and she carried with her to the tomb a terrible epithet: she was called 'the foreigner.'"

"Provoked by me, sir! How do you understand that? Was it I who fired upon the Bastille without provocation?"

"Ah! Madame," cried the king, "instead of advocating violent measures, listen to reason."

"To weakness!"

"Come, now, Antoinette, listen to the doctor," said the king, austerely. "The arrival of twenty thousand men is not a trifling matter, particularly if we should have to fire grape-shot upon them."

Then, turning towards Gilbert: —

"Go on, sir," said he; "go on."

"All these hatreds, which become more inveterate from estrangement — all these boastings, which become courage when opportunity is afforded for their realization — all the confusion of a battle, of which the issue is un-

certain — oh! spare the king, spare yourself, Madame, the grief of witnessing them," said the doctor; "you can perhaps by gentleness disperse the crowd which is advancing. The crowd wishes to come to the king, — let us forestall it; let the king go to the crowd; let him, though now surrounded by his army, give proof to-morrow of audacity and political genius. Those twenty thousand men of whom we are speaking might, perhaps, conquer the king and his army. Let the king go alone and conquer these twenty thousand men, Madame; they are the people."

The king could not refrain from giving a gesture of assent, which Marie Antoinette at once observed.

"Wretched man!" cried she to Gilbert; "but you do not then perceive what the king's presence in Paris would betoken under the conditions you require?"

"Speak, Madame."

"It would be saying, 'I approve;' it would be saying, 'You did right to kill my Swiss;' it would be saying, 'You have acted rightly in murdering my officers, in setting fire to and making my capital stream with blood; you have done rightly in dethroning me. I thank you, gentlemen, I thank you!'"

And a disdainful smile rose to the lips of Marie Antoinette.

"No, Madame, your Majesty is mistaken."

"Sir!"

"It would be saying, 'There has been some justice in the grief of the people. I am come to pardon. It is I who am the chief of the nation, and the king. It is I who am at the head of the French Revolution, as in former days Henry III. placed himself at the head of the League. Your generals are my officers, your National Guards my soldiers, your magistrates are my men of business. In-

stead of urging me onward, follow me if you are able to do so. The greatness of my stride will prove to you once more that I am the king of France, the successor of Charlemagne.' "

"He is right," said the king, in a sorrowful tone.

"Oh!" exclaimed the queen, "for mercy's sake listen not to this man! — this man is your enemy."

"Madame," said Gilbert, "his Majesty himself is about to tell you what he thinks of the words I have spoken."

"I think, sir, that you are the first who up to this moment has dared to speak the truth to me."

"The truth!" cried the queen. "Gracious Heaven! what is it you are saying?"

"Yes, Madame," rejoined Gilbert, "and impress yourself fully with this fact, that truth is the only torch which can point out and save royalty from the dark abyss into which it is now being hurried."

And while uttering these words, Gilbert bowed humbly, as low as even to the knees of Marie Antoinette.

CHAPTER IV.

DECISION.

For the first time the queen appeared deeply moved. Was it from the reasoning, or from the humility, of the doctor?

Moreover, the king had risen from his seat with a determined air; he was thinking of the execution of Gilbert's project.

However, from the habit which he had acquired of doing nothing without consulting the queen:—

"Madame," said he to her, "do you approve it?"

"It appears it must be so," replied the queen.

"I do not ask you for any abnegation," said the king.

"What is it, then, you ask?"

"I ask you for the expression of a conviction which will strengthen mine."

"You ask of me a conviction?"

"Yes."

"Oh, if it be only that, I am convinced, sir."

"Of what?"

"That the moment has arrived which will render monarchy the most deplorable and the most degrading position which exists in the whole world."

"Oh," said the king, "you exaggerate; deplorable, I will admit, but degrading, that is impossible."

"Sir, the kings, your forefathers, have bequeathed to you a very mournful inheritance," said the queen, sorrowfully.

"Yes," said Louis XVI., "an inheritance which I have the grief to make you share, Madame."

"Be pleased to allow me, Sire," said Gilbert, who truly compassionated the great misfortunes of his fallen sovereigns; "I do not believe that there is any reason for your Majesty to view the future in such terrific colors as you have depicted it. A despotic monarchy has ceased to exist; a constitutional empire commences."

"Ah, sir," said the king, "and am I a man capable of founding such an empire in France?"

"And why not, Sire?" cried the queen, somewhat comforted by the last words of Gilbert.

"Madame," replied the king, "I am a man of good sense and a learned man. I see clearly, instead of endeavoring to see confusedly, into things, and I know precisely all that is not necessary for me to know, to administer the government of this country. From the day on which I shall be precipitated from the height of the inviolability of an absolute prince — from the day on which it shall be allowed to be discovered that I am a mere plain man — I lose all the factitious strength which alone was necessary to govern France, since, to speak truly, Louis XIII., Louis XIV., and Louis XV. sustained themselves completely, thanks to this factitious strength. What do the French now require? A master. I feel that I am only capable of being a father. What do the revolutionists require? A sword. I do not feel that I have strength enough to strike."

"You do not feel that you have strength to strike!" exclaimed the queen, — "to strike people who are destroying the property of your children, and who would carry off, even from your own brow, one after the other, every gem that adorns the crown of France!"

"What answer can I make to this?" calmly said Louis

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"Do you, perchance, consider me unjust towards the Revolution? Now tell me that."

"In good faith, yes."

"You say yes, Sire, — you say yes?"

"If you were the wife of a plain citizen, my dear Antoinette, you would not speak as you do."

"I am not one."

"And that is the reason for my excusing you; but that does not mean that I approve your course. No, Madame, no, you must be resigned; we succeeded to the throne of France at a period of storm and tempest. We ought to have strength enough to push on before us that car armed with scythes, and which is called Revolution; but our strength is insufficient."

"So much the worse," said Marie Antoinette, "for it is over our children that it will be driven."

"Alas! that I know; but at all events we shall not urge it forward."

"We will make it retrograde, Sire!"

"Oh," cried Gilbert, with a prophetic accent, "beware, Madame; in retrograding, it will crush you."

"Sir," said the queen, impatiently, "I observe that you can carry the frankness of your counsels very far."

"I will be silent, Madame."

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"Be pleased to allow me, Sire," said Gilbert, who truly compassionated the great misfortunes of his fallen sovereigns; "I do not believe that there is any reason for your Majesty to view the future in such terrific colors as you have depicted it. A despotic monarchy has ceased to exist; a constitutional empire commences."

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"Oh, good Heaven! let him speak on," said the king; "what he has now announced to you, if he has not read it in twenty newspapers during the last eight days, it is because he has not chosen to read them. You should, at

least, be thankful to him that he does not convey the truths he utters in a bitter spirit."

Marie Antoinette remained silent for a moment; then, with a deep-drawn sigh:—

"I will sum up," she said, "or rather, I will repeat my arguments. By going to Paris voluntarily, it will be sanctioning all that has been done there."

"Yes," replied the king, "I know that full well."

"Yes, it would be humiliating, — disowning your army which is preparing to defend you."

"It is to spare the effusion of French blood," said the doctor.

"It is to declare that henceforward tumultuous risings and violence may give such a direction to the will of the king as may best suit the views of insurgents and traitors."

"Madame, I believe," said Gilbert, "that you had just now the goodness to acknowledge that I had had the good fortune to convince you."

"Yes, I just now did acknowledge it; one corner of the veil had been raised up before me. But now, sir, — oh, now that I am again becoming blind, as you have termed it, and I prefer looking into my own mind, to see reflected there those splendors to which education, tradition, and history have accustomed me, I prefer considering myself still a queen, than to feel myself a bad mother to this people, who insult and hate me."

"Antoinette! Antoinette!" cried Louis XVI., terrified at the sudden paleness which pervaded the queen's face, and which was nothing more than the precursor of a terrible storm of anger.

"Oh, no, no, Sire, I will speak," replied the queen.

"Beware, Madame!" said he.

And with a glance the king directed the attention of Marie Antoinette to the presence of the doctor.

"Oh, this gentleman knows all that I was about to say; he knows even everything I think," said the queen, with a bitter smile at the recollection of the scene which had just before occurred between her and the doctor; "and therefore why should I restrain myself? This gentleman, moreover, has been taken by us for our confidant, and I know not why I should have any fear of speaking. I know that you are carried, dragged away, like the unhappy prince in my dear old German ballads. Whither are you going? Of that I know nothing; but you are going whence you will never return."

"Why, no, Madame; I am going simply and plainly to Paris," replied Louis XVI.

Marie Antoinette raised her shoulders.

"Do you believe me to be insane?" said she, in a voice of deep irritation. "You are going to Paris? 'T is well. Who tells you that Paris is not an abyss which I see not, but which I can divine? Who can say whether, in the tumultuous crowd by which you will necessarily be surrounded, you will not be killed? Who knows from whence a chance shot may proceed? Who knows, amid a hundred thousand upraised and threatening hands, which it is that has directed the murderous knife?"

"Oh, on that head you need not have the slightest apprehension. They love me!" exclaimed the king.

"Oh, say not that, Sire, or you will make me pity you. They love you, and they kill, they assassinate, they massacre those who represent you on the earth; you, a king, — you, the image of God! Well, the governor of the Bastille was your representative; he was the image of the king. Be well assured of this, and I shall not be accused of exaggeration when I say it. If they have

killed De Launay, that brave and faithful servant, they would have killed you, Sire, had you been in his place, and much more easily than they killed him; for they know you, and know that instead of defending yourself, you would have bared your breast to them."

"Conclude," said the king.

"But I thought that I had concluded, Sire."

"They will kill me?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Well?"

"And my children!" exclaimed the queen.

Gilbert thought it time that he should interfere.

"Madame," said he, "the king will be so much respected at Paris, and his presence will cause such transports, that if I have a fear, it is not for the king, but for those fanatics who will throw themselves to be crushed beneath his horse's feet, like the Indian Fakirs beneath the car of their idol."

"Oh, sir, sir!" cried Marie Antoinette.

"This march to Paris will be a triumph, Madame."

"But, Sire, you do not reply."

"It is because I agree somewhat with the doctor, Madame."

"And you are impatient, are you not, to enjoy this great triumph?"

"And the king, in this case, would be right," said Gilbert, "for this impatience would be a further proof of the profoundly just discrimination with which his Majesty judges men and things. The more his Majesty shall hasten to accomplish this, the greater will his triumph be."

"Yes, you believe that, sir?"

"I am positive it will be so. For the king, by delaying it, would lose all the advantage to be derived from its

spontaneousness. But reflect, Madame, reflect, that the initiative of this measure may proceed from another quarter, and such a request would change, in the eyes of the Parisians, the position of his Majesty, and would give him, in some measure, the appearance of acceding to an order."

"There, hear you that?" exclaimed the queen. "The doctor acknowledges it — they would order you. Oh, Sire, think of that."

"The doctor does not say that they have ordered, Madame."

"Patience — patience! only delay a little, Sire, and the request, or rather the order, will arrive."

Gilbert slightly compressed his lips with a feeling of vexation, which the queen instantly caught, although it was almost as evanescent as the lightning.

"What have I said?" murmured she. "Poor simpleton! I have been arguing against myself."

"And in what, Madame?" inquired the king.

"In this, — that by a delay I should make you lose the advantage of your initiative; and, nevertheless, I have to ask for a delay."

"Ah, Madame, ask everything, exact anything, excepting that."

"Antoinette," said the king, taking her hand, "you have sworn to ruin me."

"Oh, Sire!" exclaimed the queen, in a tone of reproach, which revealed all the anguish of her heart. "And can you speak thus to me?"

"Why, then, do you attempt to delay this journey?" asked the king.

"Consider truly, Madame, that under such circumstances the fitting moment is everything; reflect on the importance of the hours which are flying past us at such

a period, when an enraged and furious people are counting them anxiously as they strike."

"Not to-day, Monsieur Gilbert; to-morrow, Sire, oh, to-morrow! Grant me till to-morrow, and I swear to you I will no longer oppose this journey."

"A day lost," murmured the king.

"Twenty-four long hours," said Gilbert; "reflect on that, Madame."

"Sire, it must be so," rejoined the queen, in a supplicating tone.

"A reason — a reason!" cried the king.

"None, but my despair, Sire; none, but my tears; none, but my entreaties."

"But between this and to-morrow what may happen? Who can tell this?" said the king, completely overcome by seeing the queen's despair.

"And what is there that could happen?" said the queen, at the same time looking at Gilbert with an air of entreaty.

"Oh," said Gilbert, "out yonder — nothing yet. A hope, were it even as vague as a cloud, would suffice to make them wait patiently till to-morrow; but —"

"But it is here, is it not?" said the king.

"Yes, Sire, it is here that we have to apprehend."

"It is the Assembly?"

Gilbert gave an affirmative nod.

"The Assembly," continued the king, "with such men as Monsieur Monnier, Monsieur Mirabeau, and Monsieur Siéyès, is capable of sending me some address which would deprive me of all the advantage of my good intentions."

"Well, then," exclaimed the queen, with gloomy fury, "so much the better, because you would then refuse —

because then you would maintain your dignity as a king — because then you would not go to Paris, and if we must here sustain a war, well, here will we sustain it — because, if we must die, we will die here, but as illustrious and unshrinking monarchs, which we are, as kings, as masters, as Christians who put their trust in God, from whom we hold the crown."

On perceiving this feverish excitement of the queen, Louis XVI. saw that there was nothing to be done but to yield to it.

He made a sign to Gilbert, and advancing to Marie Antoinette, whose hand he took : —

"Tranquillize yourself, Madame," said he to her ; "all shall be done as you desire. You know, my dear wife, that I would not do anything which would be displeasing to you, for I have the most unbounded affection for a woman of your merit, and above all, of your virtue."

And Louis XVI. accentuated these last words with inexpressible nobleness ; thus exalting with all his power the so-much calumniated queen, and that in the presence of a witness capable, should it be requisite, of properly reporting all he had heard and seen.

This delicacy profoundly moved Marie Antoinette, who, grasping with both hands the hand which the king held out to her, said : —

"Well, then, only till to-morrow, Sire, no later ; that shall be the last delay ; but I ask you that as a favor on my knees. To-morrow, at the hour which may please you, I swear to you, you shall set out for Paris."

"Take care, Madame, the doctor is a witness," said the king, smiling.

"Sire, you have never known me to forfeit my word," replied the queen.

"No ; but there is only one thing I acknowledge — "

"What is that?"

"It is, that I am anxious, resigned as you appear to be, to know why you have asked me for this delay of twenty-four hours. Do you expect some news from Paris, — some intelligence from Germany? Is there anything — "

"Do not question me, Sire."

The king was as inquisitive as Figaro was lazy; anything that excited his curiosity delighted him.

"Is there any question as to the arrival of troops, — of a reinforcement, — of any political combination?"

"Sire, Sire!" murmured the queen, in a reproachful tone.

"Is it a question of — "

"There is no question in the matter," replied the queen.

"Then it is a secret?"

"Well, then, yes! the secret of an anxious woman, that is all."

"A caprice, is it not?"

"Caprice, if you will."

"The supreme law."

"That is true. Why does it not exist in politics as in philosophy? Why are kings not permitted to make their political caprices supreme laws?"

"It will come to that, you may rest assured. As to myself, it is already done," said the king, in a jocose tone. "Therefore, till to-morrow."

"Till to-morrow!" sorrowfully rejoined the queen.

"Do you keep the doctor with you?" asked the king.

"Oh, no, no!" cried the queen, with a sort of eagerness which made Gilbert smile.

"I will take him with me, then."

Gilbert bowed a third time to the Queen Marie Antoinette, who this time returned his salutation more as a woman than a queen.

Then, as the king was going towards the door, he followed the king.

"It appears to me," said the king, as they proceeded along the gallery, "that you are on good terms with the queen, Monsieur Gilbert."

"Sire," replied the doctor, "it is a favor for which I am indebted to your Majesty."

"Long live the king!" cried the courtiers who already thronged the antechambers.

"Long live the king!" repeated a crowd of officers and foreign soldiers in the courtyard, who were eagerly hastening towards the palace doors.

These acclamations, which became louder as the crowd increased, gave greater delight to the heart of Louis XVI. than any he had before received, although he had so frequently been greeted in the same manner.

As to the queen, still seated where the king had left her, near the window, and where she had just passed such agonizing moments, when she heard the cries of devotedness and love which welcomed the king as he passed by, and which gradually died away in the distance under the porticos, or beneath the thickets of the park: —

"Long live the king!" cried she; "yes, long live the king! The king will live, and that in despite of thee, infamous Paris! Thou odious gulf, thou sanguinary abyss, thou shalt not swallow up this victim! I will drag him from thee, and that with this little, this weak arm. It threatens thee at this moment, — it devotes thee to the execration of the world and to the vengeance of God!"

And pronouncing these words with a violence of hatred which would have terrified the most furious friends of the Revolution, could they have seen and heard her, the queen stretched forth towards Paris her weak arm, which shone from beneath the lace which surrounded it, like a sword starting from its scabbard.

Then she called Madame Campan, the lady-in-waiting in whom she placed the most confidence, and shutting herself up with her in her cabinet, ordered that no one should be admitted to her presence

CHAPTER V.

THE SHIRT OF MAIL.

THE following morning the sun rose brilliant and pure as on the preceding day. Its bright rays gilded the marble and the gravel walks of Versailles. The birds, grouped in thousands on the first trees of the park, saluted, with their deafening songs, the new and balmy day of joy thus promised to their love.

The queen had risen at five o'clock. She had given orders that the king should be requested to go to her apartment as soon as he should wake.

Louis XVI., somewhat fatigued from having received a deputation of the Assembly, which had come to the palace the preceding evening, and to which he had been obliged to reply, — this was the commencement of speech-making, — Louis XVI. had slept somewhat later than usual to recover from his fatigue, and that it might not be said that he was not as vigorous as ever.

Therefore, he was scarcely dressed when the queen's message was delivered to him ; he was at that moment putting on his sword. He slightly knit his brow.

"What!" said he, "is the queen already up?"

"Oh, a long time ago, Sire."

"Is she again ill?"

"No, Sire."

"And what can the queen want at so early an hour in the morning?"

"Her Majesty did not say."

The king took his first breakfast, which consisted of a bowl of soup and a little wine, and then went to the queen's apartment.

He found the queen full dressed, as for a ceremonious reception, beautiful, pale, imposing. She welcomed her husband with that cold smile which shone like a winter's sun upon the cheeks of the queen, as when in the grand receptions at court it was necessary she should cast some rays upon the crowd.

The king could not comprehend the sorrow which pervaded that smile and look. He was already preparing himself for one thing; that is to say, the resistance of Marie Antoinette to the project which had been proposed the day before.

"Again some new caprice," thought he.

And this was the reason for his frowning. The queen did not fail, by the first words she uttered, to strengthen this opinion.

"Sire," said she, "since yesterday I have been reflecting much —"

"There now! now it is coming!" cried the king.

"Dismiss, if you please, all who are not our intimate friends," said the queen.

The king, though much annoyed, ordered his officers to leave the room. One only of the queen's women remained; it was Madame Campan.

Then the queen, laying both her beautiful hands on the king's arm, said to him: —

"Why, are you dressed already? That is wrong."

"How wrong? and why?"

"Did I not send word to you not to dress yourself until you had been here? I see you have already your coat on and your sword. I had hoped you would have come in your dressing-gown."

The king looked at her, much surprised. This fantasy of the queen awakened in his mind a crowd of strange ideas, the novelty of which only rendered the improbability still stronger. His first gesture was one of mistrust and uneasiness.

"What is it that you wish?" said he. "Do you pretend to retard or prevent that which we had yesterday agreed upon?"

"In no way, Sire."

"Let me entreat you not to jest on a matter of so serious a nature. I ought and I will go to Paris. I can no longer avoid it. My household troops are prepared. The persons who are to accompany me were summoned last night to be ready."

"Sire, I have no pretensions of that nature, but —"

"Reflect," said the king, working himself up by degrees to gain courage, — "reflect that the intelligence of my intended journey must have already reached the Parisians; that they have prepared themselves; that they are expecting me; that the very favorable feelings, as was predicted to us, that this journey has excited in the public mind, may be changed into dangerous hostility. Reflect, in fine — "

"But, Sire, I do not at all contest what you have done me the honor to say to me. I resigned myself to it yesterday; this morning I am still resigned."

"Then, Madame, why all this preamble?"

"I do not make any."

"Pardon me, pardon me! then why all these questions regarding my dress, my projects?"

"As to your dress, that I admit," answered the queen, endeavoring again to smile; but that smile, from so frequently fading away, became more and more funereal.

"What observation have you to make upon my dress?"

"I wish, Sire, that you would take off your coat."

"Do you not think it becoming? It is a silk coat, of a violet color. The Parisians are accustomed to see me dressed thus; they like to see me in this, with which moreover, the blue ribbon harmonizes well. You have often told me so yourself."

"I have, Sire, no objection to offer to the color of your coat."

"Well, then?"

"But to the lining."

"In truth, you puzzle me with that eternal smile. The lining — what jest — "

"Alas! I no longer jest."

"There! now you are feeling my waistcoat; does that displease you too? White taffeta and silver, the embroidery worked by your own hand, — it is one of my favorite waistcoats."

"I have nothing to say against the waistcoat, either."

"How singular you are! Is it, then, the frill or the embroidered cambric shirt that offends you? Why must I not appear in full dress when I am going to visit my good city of Paris?"

A bitter smile contracted the queen's lips, — the nether lip particularly, that which the "Austrian" was so much reproached for; it became thicker, and advanced as if it were swelled by all the venom of hatred and of anger.

"No," said she, "I do not reproach you for being so well dressed, Sire; but it is the lining, — the lining, I say again and again."

"The lining of my embroidered shirt! Ah, will you at least explain yourself?"

"Well, then, I will explain. The king, hated, considered an encumbrance, who is about to throw himself into the midst of seven hundred thousand Parisians, inebriated with their triumph and their revolutionary ideas, — the king is not a prince of the Middle Ages, and yet he ought to make his entry this day into Paris in a good iron cuirass, in a hemlet of good Milan steel; he should protect himself in such a way that no ball, no arrow, no stone, no knife, could reach his person."

"That is in fact true," said Louis XVI., pensively. "But, my good friend, as I do not call myself either Charles VIII., or Francis I., or even Henry IV.; as the monarchy of my day is one of velvet and of silk, — I shall go naked under my silken coat, or to speak more correctly, I shall go with a good mark at which they may aim their balls, for I wear the jewel of my orders just over my heart."

The queen uttered a stifled groan.

"Sire," said she, "we begin to understand each other. You shall see, — you shall see that your wife jests no longer."

She made a sign to Madame Campan, who had remained at the farther end of the room, and the latter took from a drawer of the queen's chiffonnier a wide oblong flat parcel, wrapped up in a silken cover.

"Sire," said the queen, "the heart of the king belongs, in the first place, to France, — that is true; but I fully believe that it belongs to his wife and children. For my part, I will not consent that this heart should be exposed to the balls of the enemy; I have adopted measures to save from every danger my husband, my king, the father of my children."

While saying this, she unfolded the silk which covered it, and displayed a waistcoat of fine steel mail, crossed

with such marvellous art that it might have been thought an Arabian watered stuff, so supple and elastic was its tissue, so admirable the play of its whole surface.

"What is that?" said the king.

"Look at it, Sire."

"A waistcoat, it appears to me."

"Why, yes, Sire."

"A waistcoat that closes up to the neck."

"With a small collar, intended, as you see, to line the collar of the waistcoat or the cravat."

The king took the waistcoat in his hands and examined it very minutely.

The queen, on observing this eagerness, was perfectly transported.

The king, on his part, appeared delighted, counting the rings of this fairy net which undulated beneath his fingers with all the flexibility of knitted wool.

"Why," exclaimed he, "this is admirable steel!"

"Is it not, Sire?"

"It is a perfect miracle of art."

"Is it not?"

"I really cannot imagine where you can have procured this."

"I bought it last night, Sire, of a man who long since wished me to purchase it of him, in the event of your going out on a campaign."

"It is admirable! admirable!" repeated the king, examining it as an artist.

"And it will fit you as well as a waistcoat made by your tailor, Sire."

"Oh, do you believe that?"

"Try it on."

The king said not a word, but took off his violet-

colored coat. The queen trembled with joy; she assisted Louis XVI. in taking off his orders, and Madame Campan the rest. The king, however, unbuckled his sword and laid it on the table.

If any one at that moment had contemplated the face of the queen, they would have seen it lit up by one of those triumphant smiles which supreme felicity alone bestows.

The king allowed her to divest him of his cravat, and the delicate fingers of the queen placed the steel collar round his neck. Then Marie Antoinette herself fastened the hooks of his corselet, which adapted itself beautifully to the shape of the body, being lined throughout with a fine doe-skin, for the purpose of preventing any uncomfortable pressure from the steel.

This waistcoat was longer than an ordinary cuirass; it covered the whole body. With the waistcoat and shirt over it, it did not increase the volume of the body even half a line. It did not in the slightest degree inconvenience any movement of the wearer.

"Is it very heavy?" asked the queen.

"No."

"Only see, my king, it is a perfect wonder, is it not?" said the queen, clapping her hands, and turning to Madame Campan, who was just buttoning the king's ruffles.

Madame Campan manifested her joy in as artless a manner as did the queen.

"I have saved my king!" cried Marie Antoinette. "Test this invisible cuirass; prove it; place it upon a table; try if you can make any impression upon it with a knife; try if you can make a hole through it with a ball; try it! try it!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the king, with a doubting air.

"Only try it!" repeated she, with enthusiasm.

"I would willingly do so from curiosity," replied the king.

"You need not do so; it would be superfluous, Sire."

"How! it would be superfluous that I should prove to you the excellence of this marvel of yours?"

"Ah! thus it is with all the men. Do you believe that I would have given faith to the judgment of another, — of an indifferent person, when the life of my husband, the welfare of France, was in question?"

"And yet, Antoinette, it seems to me that this is precisely what you have done, — you have put faith in another."

The queen shook her head with a delightfully playful obstinacy.

"Ask her!" said she, pointing to the woman who was present, — "ask our good Campan there what we have done this morning?"

"What was it, then? Good Heaven!" ejaculated the king, completely puzzled.

"This morning — what am I saying? — this night, after dismissing all the attendants, we went, like two mad-brained women, and shut ourselves up in her room, which is at the far end of the wing occupied by the pages. Now, the pages were sent off last night to prepare the apartments at Rambouillet; and we felt well assured that no one could interrupt us before we had executed our project."

"Good Heaven! you really alarm me! What were the designs, then, of these two Judiths?"

"Judith effected less, and certainly with less noise. But for that, the comparison would be marvellously appropriate. Campan carried the bag which contained this breast-plate; as for me, I carried a long hunting-

knife which belonged to my father, — that infallible blade which killed so many wild boars."

"Judith! still Judith!" cried the king, laughing.

"Oh, Judith had not the heavy pistol which I took from your armory, and which I made Weber load for me."

"A pistol?"

"Undoubtedly. You ought to have seen us running in the dark, startled, agitated at the slightest noise, avoiding everybody for fear of their being indiscreet, creeping like two little mice along the deserted corridors. Campan locked three doors and placed a mattress against the last, to prevent our being overheard; we put the cuirass on one of the figures which they use to stretch my gowns on, and placed it against a wall. And I — with a firm hand, too, I can assure you — struck the breast-plate with the knife; the blade bent, flew out of my hand, and bounding back, stuck into the floor, to our great terror."

"The deuce!" exclaimed the king.

"Wait a little."

"Did it not make a hole?" asked Louis XVI.

"Wait a little, I tell you. Campan pulled the knife out of the board. 'You are not strong enough, Madame,' she said, 'and perhaps your hand trembles. I am stronger, as you shall see.' She therefore raised the knife, and gave the figure so violent a blow, so well applied, that my poor German knife snapped off short against the steel mail."

"See, here are the two pieces, Sire. I will have a dagger made for you out of one of them."

"Oh, this is absolutely fabulous!" cried the king; "and the mail was not injured?"

"A slight scratch on the exterior ring, and there are three, one over the other."

"I should like to see it."

"You shall see it."

And the queen began to undress the king again with wonderful celerity, in order that he might the sooner admire her idea and her high feats in arms.

"Here is a place that is somewhat damaged, it would appear to me," said the king, pointing to a slight depression over a space of about an inch in circumference.

"That was done by the pistol-ball, Sire."

"How! you fired off a pistol loaded with ball? you?"

"Here is the ball completely flattened, and still black. Here, take it; and now do you believe that your life is in safety?"

"You are my tutelary angel," said the king, who began slowly to unhook the mailed waistcoat, in order to examine more minutely the traces left by the knife and the pistol-shot.

"Judge of my terror, dear king," said Marie Antoinette, "when on the point of firing the pistol at the breast-plate. Alas! the fear of the report — that horrible noise which you know has so frightful an effect upon me — was nothing; but it appeared to me that in firing at the waistcoat destined to protect you, I was firing at you yourself. I was afraid of wounding you; I feared to see a hole in the mail, and then my efforts, my trouble, my hopes, were forever lost."

"My dear wife," said Louis XVI., having completely unhooked the coat of mail and placed it on the table, "what gratitude do I not owe you!"

"Well, now, what is it you are doing?" asked the queen.

And she took the waistcoat and again presented it to the king. But with a smile replete with nobleness and kindness: —

"No," said he, "I thank you."

"You refuse it?" said the queen.

"I refuse it."

"Oh, but reflect a moment, Sire."

"Sire," cried Madame Campan, in a supplicating tone.

"But," said the queen, "'t is your salvation; 't is your life!"

"That is possible," said the king.

"You refuse the succor which God himself has sent us."

"Enough! enough!" said the king.

"Oh, you refuse! you refuse!"

"Yes, I refuse."

"But they will kill you."

"My dear Antoinette, when gentlemen in this eighteenth century are going out to battle, they wear a cloth coat, waistcoat, and shirt; this is all they have to defend them against musket-balls. When they go upon the field of honor to fight a duel, they throw off all but their shirt, — that is for the sword. As to myself, I am the first gentleman of my kingdom; I will do neither more nor less than my friends; and there is more than this, — while they wear cloth, I alone have the right to wear silk. Thanks, my good wife; thanks, my good queen; thanks."

"Ah!" exclaimed the queen, at once despairing and delighted, "why cannot his army hear him speak thus?"

As to the king, he quietly completed his toilette, without even appearing to understand the act of heroism he had just performed.

"Is the monarchy then lost," murmured the queen, "when we can feel so proudly at such a moment?"

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEPARTURE.

On leaving the queen's apartment, the king immediately found himself surrounded by all the officers and all the persons of his household, who had been appointed by him to attend him on his journey to Paris.

The principal personages were Messieurs de Beauvau, de Villeroy, de Nesle, and d'Estaing.

Gilbert was waiting in the middle of the crowd till Louis XVI. should perceive him, were it only to cast a look upon him in passing.

It could be easily perceived that the whole of the throng there present were still in doubt, and that they could not credit that the king would persist in following up the resolution he had come to.

"After breakfast, gentlemen," said the king, "we will set out."

Then, perceiving Gilbert: —

"Ah, you are there, Doctor," he continued, "you know that I take you with me."

"At your orders, Sire."

The king went into his cabinet, where he was engaged two hours. He afterwards attended Mass with all his household; then, at about nine o'clock, he sat down to breakfast.

The repast was taken with the usual ceremonies, excepting that the queen, who, after attending Mass, was observed to be out of spirits, her eyes red and swollen,

had insisted on being present at the king's repast, but without partaking of it in the slightest manner, that she might be with him to the last moment.

The queen had brought her two children with her, who, already much agitated, doubtless by what the queen had said to them, were looking anxiously from time to time at their father's face, and then at the crowd of officers of the guards, who were present.

The children, moreover, from time to time, by order of their mother, wiped away a tear, which every now and then would rise to their eyelids; and the sight of this excited the pity of some and the anger of others, and filled the whole assembly with profound grief.

The king ate on stoically. He spoke several times to Gilbert, without taking his eyes off his plate; he spoke frequently to the queen, and always with deep affection.

At last he gave instructions to the commanders of his troops.

He was just finishing his breakfast, when an officer came in to announce to him that a compact body of men on foot, coming from Paris, had just appeared at the end of the grand avenue leading to the Place d'Armes.

On hearing this, the officers and guards at once rushed out of the room. The king raised his head and looked at Gilbert; but seeing that Gilbert smiled, he tranquilly continued eating.

The queen turned pale, and leaned towards Monsieur de Beauvau, to request him to obtain information.

Monsieur de Beauvau ran out precipitately.

The queen then drew near to the window.

Five minutes afterwards Monsieur de Beauvau returned.

"Sire," said he, on entering the room, "they are National Guards, from Paris, who, hearing the rumor

spread yesterday in the capital, of your Majesty's intention to visit the Parisians, assembled to the number of some ten thousand, for the purpose of coming out to meet you on the road; and not meeting you so soon as they expected, they have pushed on to Versailles."

"What appear to be their intentions?" asked the king.

"The best in the world," replied Monsieur de Beauvau.

"That matters not," said the queen; "have the gates closed."

"Take good care not to do that," said the king; "it is quite enough that the palace-doors remain closed."

The queen frowned, and darted a look at Gilbert.

The latter was awaiting this look from the queen, for one half his prediction was already fulfilled. He had promised the arrival of twenty thousand men, and ten thousand had already come.

The king turned to Monsieur de Beauvau.

"See that refreshments be given to these worthy people," said he.

Monsieur de Beauvau went down a second time. He transmitted to the cellar-men the order he had received from the king.

After doing this, he went upstairs again.

"Well?" said the king, in a tone of inquiry.

"Well, Sire, your Parisians are in high discussion with the gentlemen of the Guards."

"How!" cried the king, "there is a discussion?"

"Oh! one of pure courteousness. As they have been informed that the king is to set out in two hours, they wish to await his departure, and march behind his Majesty's carriage."

"But," inquired the queen, in her turn, "they are on foot, I suppose?"

"Yes, Madame."

"But the king has horses to his carriage, and the king travels fast, very fast; you know, Monsieur de Beauvau, that the king is accustomed to travelling very rapidly."

These words, pronounced in the tone the queen pronounced them, implied: —

"Put wings to his Majesty's carriage."

The king made a sign with his hand to stop the colloquy.

"I will go at a walk."

The queen heaved a sigh which almost resembled a cry of anger.

"It would not be right," tranquilly added Louis XVI., "that I should make these worthy people run, who have taken the trouble to come so far to do me honor. My carriage shall be driven at a walk, and a slow walk too, so that everybody may be able to follow me."

The whole of the company testified their admiration by a murmur of approbation; but at the same time there was seen on the countenances of several persons the reflection of the disapproval which was expressed by the features of the queen, at so much goodness of soul, which she considered as mere weakness.

A window was opened.

The queen turned round, amazed. It was Gilbert, who, in his quality of physician, had only exercised the right which appertained to him of renewing the air of the dining-room, thickened by the odors of the viands and the breathing of two hundred persons.

The doctor stood behind the curtains of the open window, through which ascended the voices of the crowd assembled in the courtyard.

"What is that?" asked the king.

"Sire," replied Gilbert, "the National Guards are down there on the pavement, exposed to the heat of the sun, and they must feel it very oppressive."

"Why not invite them upstairs to breakfast with the king?" sarcastically said one of her favorite officers to the queen.

"They should be taken to some shady place; put them into the marble courtyard, into the vestibules, wherever it is cool," said the king.

"Ten thousand men in the vestibules!" exclaimed the queen.

"If they are scattered everywhere, there will be room enough for them," said the king.

"Scattered everywhere!" cried Marie Antoinette, "why, sir, you will teach them the way to your own bedchamber."

This was the prophecy of terror which was to be realized at Versailles before three months had elapsed.

"They have a great many children with them, Madame," said Gilbert, in a gentle tone.

"Children!" exclaimed the queen.

"Yes, Madame; a great many have brought their children with them, as if on a party of pleasure. The children are dressed as little National Guards, so great is the enthusiasm for this new institution."

The queen opened her lips as if about to speak; but almost instantly she held down her head.

She had felt a desire to utter a kind word; but pride and hatred had stopped it ere it escaped her lips.

Gilbert looked at her attentively.

"Ah!" cried the king, "those poor children! When people bring children with them, it is plain that they have no intention to do harm to the father of a family,—

another reason for putting them in a cooler place, poor little things! Let them in; let them in."

Gilbert then, gently shaking his head, appeared to say to the queen, who had remained silent: —

"There, Madame; that is what *you* ought to have said; I gave you the opportunity. Your kind words would have been repeated, and you would have gained two years of popularity."

The queen comprehended Gilbert's mute language, and a blush suffused her face.

She felt the error she had committed, and immediately excused herself by a feeling of pride and resistance, which she expressed by a glance, as a reply to Gilbert. During this time Monsieur de Beauvau was following the king's orders relating to the National Guards.

Then were heard shouts of joy and benediction from that armed crowd, admitted by the king's order to the interior of the palace.

The acclamations, the fervent wishes, the loud hurrahs, ascended as a whirlwind to the hall in which the king and queen were seated, whom they reassured with regard to the disposition of the so-much-dreaded inhabitants of Paris.

"Sire," said Monsieur de Beauvau, "in what order is it that your Majesty determines the procession shall be conducted?"

"And the discussion between the National Guards and my officers?"

"Oh, Sire, it has evaporated, vanished; those worthy people are so happy that they now say, 'We will go wherever you may please to place us. The king is our king as much as he is everybody else's king. Wherever he may be, he is ours.'"

The king looked at Marie Antoinette, who curled, with an ironical smile, her disdainful lip.

"Tell the National Guards," said Louis XVI., "that they may place themselves where they will."

"Your Majesty," said the queen, "will not forget that your body-guards have the right of surrounding your carriage."

The officers, who perceived that the king was somewhat undecided, advanced to support the arguments of the queen.

"That is the case, undoubtedly," replied the king. "Well, we shall see."

Monsieur de Beauvau and Monsieur de Villeroy left the room to take their stations and to give the necessary orders.

The clock of Versailles struck ten.

"Well, well," said the king, "I shall put off my usual labors till to-morrow; these worthy people ought not to be kept waiting."

The king rose from table.

Marie Antoinette went to the king, clasped him in her arms, and embraced him. The children clung weeping to their father's neck. Louis XVI., who was much moved, endeavored gently to release himself from them; he wished to conceal the emotions which would soon have become overpowering.

The queen stopped all the officers as they passed her, seizing one by his arm, another by his sword.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" said she. And this eloquent exclamation recommended to them to be watchful for the safety of the king, who had just descended the staircase.

All of them placed their hands upon their hearts and upon their swords.

The queen smiled to thank them.

Gilbert remained in the room till almost the last.

"Sir," said the queen to him, "it was you who advised the king to take this step. It was you who induced the king to come to this resolution, in spite of my entreaties. Reflect, sir, that you have assumed a fearful responsibility as regards the wife, as regards the children."

"I am sensible of that," coldly replied Gilbert.

"And you will bring the king back to me safe and unhurt?" she said with a solemn gesture.

"Yes, Madame."

"Reflect that you will answer for his safety with your head."

Gilbert bowed.

"Reflect that your head is answerable," cried Marie Antoinette, with the menacing and pitiless authority of an absolute monarch.

"Upon my head be the risk," said the doctor, again bowing. "Yes, Madame; and this pledge I should consider as a hostage of but little value, if I believed the king's safety to be at all threatened. But I have said, Madame, that it is to a triumph that I this day conduct his Majesty."

"I must have news of him every hour," added the queen.

"You shall, Madame; and this I swear to you."

"Go, sir; go at once. I hear the drums; the king is about to leave the palace."

Gilbert bowed, and descending the grand staircase, found himself face to face with one of the king's aides-de-camp, who was seeking him by order of his Majesty.

They made him get into a carriage which belonged to Monsieur de Beauvau; the grand master of the ceremonies not allowing, as he had not produced proofs of

his nobility, that he should travel in one of the king's carriages.

Gilbert smiled on finding himself alone in a carriage with arms upon its panels, Monsieur de Beauvau being on horseback, curvetting by the side of the royal carriage.

Then it struck him that it was ridiculous in him thus to be occupying a carriage on which was painted a princely coronet and armorial bearings.

This scruple was still annoying him when, from the midst of a crowd of National Guards, who were following the carriage, he heard the following conversation, though carried on in a half-whisper by men who were curiously stretching out their necks to look at him.

"Oh! that one, — that is the Prince de Beauvau."

"Why," cried a comrade, "you are mistaken."

"I tell you it must be so, since the carriage has the prince's arms upon it."

"The arms! the arms! I say that means nothing."

"Zounds!" said another, "what do the arms prove?"

"They prove that if the arms of Monsieur de Beauvau are upon the coach, it must be Monsieur de Beauvau who is inside of it."

"Monsieur de Beauveau, — is he a patriot?" asked a woman.

"Pooh!" exclaimed the National Guard.

Gilbert again smiled.

"But I tell you," said the first contradictor, "that it is not the prince. The prince is stout; that one is thin. The prince wears the uniform of a commandant of the guards; that one wears a black coat, — it is his intendant."

A murmur, which was by no means favorable to Gilbert, arose among the crowd, who had degraded him by giving him this title, which was not at all flattering.

"Why, no, by the devil's horns!" cried a loud voice, the sound of which made Gilbert start. It was the voice of a man who with his elbows and his fists was clearing his way to get near the carriage. "No," said he, "it is neither Monsieur de Beauvau nor his intendant. It is that brave and famous patriot, and even the most famous of all the patriots. Why, Monsieur Gilbert, what the devil are you doing in the carriage of a prince?"

"Ha! it is you, Father Billot!" exclaimed the doctor.

"By Heaven," replied the farmer, "I took good care not to lose the opportunity!"

"And Pitou?" asked Gilbert.

"Oh, he is not far off. Hilloa, Pitou! where are you? Come this way; come quickly!"

And Pitou, on hearing this invitation, managed by a dexterous use of his shoulders to slip through the crowd till he reached Billot's side, and then with admiration bowed to Gilbert.

"Good-day, Monsieur Gilbert," said he.

"Good-day, Pitou; good-day, my friend."

"Gilbert! Gilbert! who is he?" inquired the crowd of one another.

"Such is fame," thought the doctor, — "well known at Villers-Cotterets; yes; but at Paris popularity is everything."

He alighted from the carriage, which continued its onward progress at a walk, while Gilbert moved on with the crowd, on foot, leaning on Billot's arm.

He in a few words related to the farmer his visit to Versailles, the good disposition of the king and the royal family; he in a few minutes preached such a propaganda of royalism to the group by which he was surrounded that, simple and delighted, these worthy people, who were yet easily induced to receive good impressions, uttered

loud and continued shouts of "Long live the king!" which, taken up by those who preceded them, soon reached the head of the line, and deafened Louis XVI. in his carriage.

"I will see the king!" cried Billot, electrified. "I must get close to him, and see him well; I came all this way on purpose. I will judge him by his face; the eye of an honest man can always speak for itself. Let us get nearer to his carriage, Monsieur Gilbert, shall we not?"

"Wait a little, and it will be easy for us to do so," replied Gilbert; "for I see one of Monsieur de Beauvau's aides-de-camp, who is seeking for some one, coming this way."

And, in fact, a cavalier, who, managing his horse with every sort of precaution, amid the groups of fatigued but joyous pedestrians, was endeavoring to get near the carriage which Gilbert had just left.

Gilbert called to him.

"Are you not looking, sir, for Doctor Gilbert?" he inquired.

"Himself," replied the aide-de-camp.

"In that case, I am he."

"Monsieur de Beauvau sends for you, at the king's request."

These high-sounding words made Billot's eyes open widely; and on the crowd they had the effect of making them open their ranks to allow Gilbert to pass. Gilbert glided through them, followed by Billot and Pitou, the aide-de-camp going before them, who kept on repeating:

"Make room, gentlemen, make room; let us pass, in the king's name, let us pass!"

Gilbert soon reached the door of the royal carriage, which was moving onward as if drawn by Merovingian oxen.

CHAPTER VII.

THE JOURNEY.

Thus pushing and thus pushed, but still following Monsieur de Beauvau's aide-de-camp, Gilbert, Billot, and Pitou at length reached the carriage in which the king, accompanied by Messieurs d'Estaing and de Villequier, was slowly advancing amid the crowd, which continually increased.

Extraordinary, unknown, unheard-of spectacle! for it was the first time that such a one had been seen. All those National Guards from the surrounding villages — impromptu soldiers suddenly sprung up — hastened with cries of joy to greet the king in his progress, saluting him with their benedictions, endeavoring to gain a look from him, and then, instead of returning to their homes, taking place in the procession, and accompanying their monarch towards Paris.

And why? No one could have given a reason for it. Were they obeying an instinct? They had seen, but they wished again to see, this well-beloved king.

For it must be acknowledged that at this period Louis XVI. was an adored king, to whom the French would have raised altars, had it not been for the profound contempt with which Voltaire had inspired them for all altars.

Louis XVI. therefore had no altars raised to him, but solely because the thinkers of that day had too high an esteem for him to inflict upon him such a humiliation.

Louis XVI. perceived Gilbert leaning upon the arm of Billot; behind them marched Pitou, still dragging after him his long sabre.

"Ah, Doctor," cried the king, "what magnificent weather, and what a magnificent people!"

"You see, Sire," replied Gilbert. Then, turning towards the king: "What did I promise your Majesty?"

"Yes, sir, yes; and you have worthily fulfilled your promise."

The king raised his head, and with the intention of being heard:—

"We move but slowly," said he; "and yet it appears to me that we advance but too rapidly for all that we have to see."

"Sire," said Monsieur de Beauvau, "and yet, at the pace your Majesty is going, you are travelling about one league in three hours. It would be difficult to go more slowly."

In fact, the horses were stopped every moment; harangues and replies were interchanged; the National Guards *fraternized* — the word was only then invented — with the body-guards of his Majesty.

"Ah!" said Gilbert to himself, who contemplated this singular spectacle as a philosopher, "if they fraternize with the body-guards, it was because before being friends they had been enemies."

"I say, Monsieur Gilbert," said Billot, in a half-whisper, "I have had a good look at the king; I have listened to him with all my ears. Well, my opinion is that the king is an honest man!"

And the enthusiasm which animated Billot was so overpowering that he raised his voice in uttering these last words to such a pitch that the king and his staff heard him.

The officers laughed outright.

The king smiled, and then, nodding his head : —

"That is praise which pleases me," said he.

These words were spoken loud enough for Billot to hear them.

"Oh, you are right, Sire, for I do not give it to everybody," replied Billot, entering at once into conversation with his king, as Michaud, the miller, did with Henry IV.

"And that flatters me so much the more," rejoined the king, much embarrassed at not knowing how to maintain his dignity as a king, and speak graciously as a good patriot.

Alas ! the poor prince was not yet accustomed to call himself King of the French.

He thought that he was still called the King of France.

Billot, beside himself with joy, did not give himself the trouble to reflect whether Louis, in a philosophical point of view, had abdicated the title of king to adopt the title of a man. Billot, who felt how much this language resembled rustic plainness, — Billot applauded himself for having comprehended the king, and for having been comprehended by him.

Therefore from that moment Billot became more and more enthusiastic. He drank from the king's looks, according to the Virgilian expression, deep draughts of love for constitutional royalty, and communicated it to Pitou, who, too full of his own love and the superfluity of Billot's, overflowed at first in stentorian shouts, then in more squeaking, and finally in less articulate ones of : —

"Long live the king ! Long live the father of the people ! "

This modification in the voice of Pitou was produced by degrees in proportion as he became more and more hoarse.

Pitou was as hoarse as a bull-frog when the procession reached the Point du Jour, where the Marquis de Lafayette, on his celebrated white charger, was keeping in order the undisciplined and agitated cohorts of the National Guard, who had from five o'clock that morning lined the road to receive the royal procession.

At this time it was nearly two o'clock.

The interview between the king and this new chief of armed France passed off in a manner that was satisfactory to all present.

The king, however, began to feel fatigued. He no longer spoke ; he contented himself with merely smiling.

The general-in-chief of the Parisian militia could no longer utter a command ; he only gesticulated.

The king had the satisfaction to find that the crowd as frequently cried : "Long live the king!" as "Long live Lafayette!" Unfortunately, this was the last time he was destined to enjoy this gratification of his self-love.

During this, Gilbert remained constantly at the door of the king's carriage, Billot near Gilbert, Pitou near Billot.

Gilbert, faithful to his promise, had found means, since his departure from Versailles, to despatch four couriers to the queen.

These couriers had each been the bearer of good news, for at every step of his journey the king had seen caps thrown up in the air as he passed, only on each of these caps shone the colors of the nation, a species of reproach addressed to the white cockade which the king's guards and the king himself wore in their hats.

In the midst of his joy and enthusiasm, this discrepancy in the cockades was the only thing which annoyed Billot.

Billot had on his cocked hat an enormous tricolored cockade.

The king had a white cockade in his hat; the tastes of the subject and the king were not therefore absolutely similar.

This idea so much perplexed him that he could not refrain from unburdening his mind upon the subject to Gilbert, at a moment when the latter was not conversing with the king.

"Monsieur Gilbert," said he to him, "how is it that his Majesty does not wear the national cockade?"

"Because, my dear Billot, either the king does not know that there is a new cockade, or he considers that the cockade he wears ought to be the cockade of the nation."

"Oh, no! oh, no! since his cockade is a white one, and our cockade — ours — is a tricolored one."

"One moment," said Gilbert, stopping Billot just as he was about to launch with heart and soul into the arguments advanced by the newspapers of the day; "the king's cockade is white, as the flag of France is white. The king is in no way to blame for this. Cockade and flag were white long before he came into the world. Moreover, my dear Billot, that flag has performed great feats, and so has the white cockade. There was a white cockade in the hat of Admiral de Suffren, when he re-established our flag in the East Indies. There was a white cockade in the hat of Assas, and it was by that the Germans recognized him in the night, when he allowed himself to be killed rather than that they should take his soldiers by surprise. There was a white cockade in the hat of Marshal Saxe, when he defeated the English at

Fontenoy. There was, in fine, a white cockade in the hat of the Prince de Condé, when he beat the Imperialists at Rocroi, at Fribourg, and at Lens. The white cockade has done all this, and a great many other things, my dear Billot; while the national cockade, which will perhaps make a tour round the world, as Lafayette has predicted, has not yet had time to accomplish anything, seeing that it has existed only for the last three days. I do not say that it will rest idle, do you understand; but, in short, having as yet done nothing, it gives the king full right to wait till it has done something."

"How? the national cockade has as yet done nothing?" cried Billot. "Has it not taken the Bastille?"

"It has," said Gilbert, sorrowfully; "you are right, Billot."

"And that is why," triumphantly rejoined the farmer, — "that is why the king ought to adopt it."

Gilbert gave a furious nudge with his elbow into Billot's ribs, for he had perceived the king was listening, and then, in a low tone: —

"Are you mad, Billot?" said he; "and against whom was the Bastille taken, then? Against royalty, it seems to me. And now you would make the king wear the trophies of your triumph and the insignia of his own defeat. Madman! the king is all heart, all goodness, all candor, and you would wish him to show himself a hypocrite!"

"But," said Billot, more humbly, without, however, giving up the argument altogether, "it was not precisely against the king that the Bastille was taken; it was against despotism."

Gilbert shrugged up his shoulders, but with the delicacy of the superior man, who will not place his foot on his inferior, for fear that he should crush him.

"No," said Billot, again becoming animated, "it is not against our good king that we have fought, but against his satellites."

Now, in those days they said, speaking politically, satellites instead of saying soldiers, as they said in the theatres, courser instead of horse.

"Moreover," continued Billot, and with some appearance of reason, "he disapproves them, since he comes thus in the midst of us; and if he disapproves them, he must approve us. It is for our happiness and his honor that we have worked, — we, the conquerors of the Bastille."

"Alas! alas!" murmured Gilbert, who did not know how to reconcile the appearance of the king's features with that which he knew must be passing in his heart.

As to the king, he began, amid the confused murmurs of the march, to understand some few words of the conversation entered into by his side.

Gilbert, who perceived the attention which the king was paying to the discussion, made every effort to lead Billot on to less slippery ground than that on which he had ventured.

Suddenly the procession stopped; it had arrived at the Cours la Reine, at the gate formerly called La Conférence, in the Champs Élysées.

There a deputation of electors and aldermen, presided over by the new mayor, Bailly, had drawn themselves up in fine array, with a guard of three hundred men, commanded by a colonel, besides at least three hundred members of the National Assembly, taken, as it will be readily imagined, from the ranks of the Tiers État.

Two of the electors united their strength and their address to hold in equilibrium a vast salver of gilt plate,

upon which were lying two enormous keys, — the keys of the city of Paris during the days of Henry IV.

This imposing spectacle at once put a stop to all individual conversations; and every one, whether in the crowd or in the ranks, immediately directed their attention to the speeches about to be pronounced on the occasion.

Bailly, the worthy man of science, the admirable astronomer, who had been made a deputy in defiance to his own will, a mayor in spite of his objections, an orator notwithstanding his unwillingness, had prepared a long speech. This speech had for its exordium, according to the strictest laws of rhetoric, a laudatory encomium on the king, from the coming into power of Monsieur Turgot down to the taking of the Bastille. Little was wanting, such privilege has eloquence, to attribute to the king the initiative in the measures which the people had been compelled unwillingly to adopt.

Bailly was delighted with the speech he had prepared, when an incident (it is Bailly himself who relates this incident in his Memoirs) furnished him with a new exordium, very much more picturesque than the one he had prepared, — the only one, moreover, which remained engraved on the minds of the people, always ready to seize upon good and, above all, fine-sounding phrases, when founded upon a material fact.

While walking towards the place of meeting, with the aldermen and the electors, Bailly was alarmed at the weight of the keys which he was about to present to the king.

"Do you believe," said he, laughingly, "that after having shown these to the king, I will undergo the fatigue of carrying them back to Paris?"

"What will you do with them, then?" asked one of the electors.

"What will I do with them?" said Bailly. "Why, I will give them to you, or I will throw them into some ditch at the foot of a tree."

"Take good care not to do that!" cried the elector, completely horrified. "Do you not know that these keys are the same which the city of Paris offered to Henry IV. after the siege? They are very precious; they are inestimable antiquities."

"You are right," rejoined Bailly; "the keys offered to Henry IV., the conqueror of Paris, and which are now to be offered to Louis XVI., heh? Why, I declare, now," said the worthy mayor to himself, "this would be a capital antithesis in my speech."

And instantly he took a pencil and wrote above the speech he had prepared the following exordium: —

"Sire, I present to your Majesty the keys of the good city of Paris. They are the same which were offered to Henry IV. He had re-conquered his people; to-day the people have re-conquered their king."

The phrase was well turned, and it was also true. It implanted itself in the memories of the Parisians; and of all the speeches, all the works of Bailly, this only survived.

As to Louis XVI., he approved it by an affirmative nod, but coloring deeply at the same time; for he felt the epigrammatic irony which it conveyed, although concealed beneath a semblance of respect and oratorical flourishes.

"Oh! Marie Antoinette," murmured Louis XVI. to himself, "would not allow herself to be deceived by this pretended veneration of Monsieur Bailly, and would reply in a very different manner from that which I am about to do to the untoward astronomer."

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And these reflections were the cause why Louis XVI., who had paid too much attention to the commencement of the speech, did not listen at all to the conclusion of it, nor to that of the president of the electors, Monsieur Delavigne, of which he heard neither the beginning nor the end.

However, the addresses being concluded, the king, fearing not to appear sufficiently delighted with their efforts to say that which was agreeable to him, replied in a very noble tone, and without making any allusion to what the orators had said, that the *homage* of the city of Paris and of the electors was exceedingly gratifying to him.

After which he gave orders for the procession to move on towards the Hôtel de Ville.

But before it recommenced its march, he dismissed his body-guard, wishing to respond by a gracious confidence to the half-politeness which had been evinced to him by the municipality through their organs, the president of the electors and Monsieur Bailly.

Being thus alone, amid the enormous mass of National Guards and spectators, the carriage advanced more rapidly.

Gilbert and his companion Billot still retained their posts on the right of the carriage.

At the moment when they were crossing the Place Louis XV., the report of a gun was heard, fired from the opposite side of the Seine ; and a white smoke arose, like a veil of incense, towards the blue sky, where it as suddenly vanished.

As if the report of this musket-shot had found an echo within his breast, Gilbert had felt himself struck, as by a violent blow. For a second his breath failed him, and he hastily pressed his hand to his heart, where he felt a sudden and severe pain.

At the same instant a cry of distress was heard around the royal carriage; a woman had fallen to the ground, shot through the right shoulder.

One of the buttons of Gilbert's coat, a large steel button, cut diamond-fashion, as they were worn at the period, had just been struck diagonally by that same ball.

It had performed the office of a breastplate, and the ball had glanced off from it; this had caused the painful shock which Gilbert had experienced.

Part of his waistcoat and his frill had been torn off by the ball.

This ball, on glancing from the button, had killed the unfortunate woman, who was instantly removed from the spot, bleeding profusely.

The king had heard the shot, but had seen nothing.

He leaned towards Gilbert, and smiling, said:—

"They are burning gunpowder yonder, to do me honor."

"Yes, Sire," replied Gilbert.

But he was careful not to mention to his Majesty the nature of the ovation which they were offering to him.

In his own mind, however, he acknowledged that the queen had some reason for the apprehensions she had expressed, since, but for him standing immediately before, and closing the carriage-door, as it were, hermetically, that ball, which had glanced off from his steel button, would have gone straight to the king's breast.

And now from what hand had proceeded this so well-aimed shot?

No one then wished to inquire, so that it will never now be known.

Billot, pale from what he had just seen, his eyes inces-

santly attracted to the rent made in Gilbert's coat, waistcoat, and frill, excited Pitou to shout as loudly as he could, "Long live the *Father of the French!*"

The event of the day was so great that this episode was quickly forgotten.

At last Louis XVI. arrived in front of the Hôtel de Ville, after having been saluted on the Pont Neuf by a discharge of cannon, which, at all events, were not loaded with ball.

Upon the façade of the Hôtel de Ville was an inscription, in large letters, black in the daylight, but which, when it was dark, were to form a brilliant transparency. This inscription was the result of the ingenious lucubrations of the municipal authorities.

The inscription was as follows: —

TO LOUIS XVI., FATHER OF THE FRENCH, AND KING OF A FREE PEOPLE.

Another antithesis, much more important than the one contained in Monsieur Bailly's speech, and which elicited shouts of admiration from all the Parisians assembled in the square.

The inscription attracted the attention of Billot.

But as Billot could not read, he made Pitou read the inscription to him.

Billot made him read it a second time, as if he had not understood it perfectly at first.

Then, when Pitou had repeated the phrase, without varying in a single word: —

"Is it that?" cried he, — "is it that?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Pitou.

"The municipality has written that the king is a king of a free people?"

"Yes, Father Billot."

"Well, then," exclaimed Billot, "since the nation is free, it has the right to offer its cockade to the king."

And with one bound, rushing before the king, who was then alighting from his carriage at the front steps of the Hôtel de Ville : —

"Sire," said he, "you saw on the Pont Neuf that the Henry IV. in bronze wore the national cockade."

"Well?" cried the king.

"Well, Sire, if Henry IV. wears the national cockade, you can wear it too."

"Certainly," said Louis XVI., much embarrassed; "and if I had one — "

"Well," cried Billot, in a louder tone, and raising his hand, "in the name of the people I offer you this one in the place of yours ; accept it."

Bailly intervened.

The king was pale. He began to see the progressive encroachment. He looked at Bailly as if to ask his opinion.

"Sire," said the latter, "it is the distinctive sign of every Frenchman."

"In that case I accept it," said the king, taking the cockade from Billot's hands.

And putting aside his own white cockade, he placed the tricolored one in his hat.

An immense triumphant hurrah was echoed from the great crowd upon the square.

Gilbert turned away his head, much grieved.

He considered that the people were encroaching too rapidly, and that the king did not resist sufficiently.

"Long live the king!" cried Billot, who thus gave the signal for a second round of applause.

"The king is dead," murmured Gilbert; "there is no longer a king in France."

An arch of steel had been formed, by a thousand swords held up, from the place at which the king had alighted from his carriage, to the door of the hall in which the municipal authorities were waiting to receive him.

He passed beneath this arch, and disappeared in the gloomy passages of the Hôtel de Ville.

"That is not a triumphal arch," said Gilbert, "but the Caudine Forks."

Then, with a sigh : —

"Ah! what will the queen say to this?"

CHAPTER VIII.

SHOWING WHAT WAS TAKING PLACE AT VERSAILLES WHILE THE KING WAS LISTENING TO THE SPEECHES OF THE MUNICIPALITY.

In the interior of the Hôtel de Ville the king received the most flattering welcome; he was styled the Restorer of Liberty.

Being invited to speak, — for the thirst for speeches became every day more intense, — and wishing, in short, to ascertain the feelings of all present, the king placed his hand upon his heart, and said: —

"Gentlemen, you may always calculate on my affection."

While he was thus listening in the Hôtel de Ville to the communications from the government, — for from that day a real government was constituted in France, besides that of the throne and the National Assembly, — the people outside the building were admiring the beautiful horses, the gilt carriage, the lackeys, and the coachman of his Majesty.

Pitou, since the entry of the king into the Hôtel de Ville, had, thanks to a louis given by Father Billot, amused himself in making a goodly quantity of cockades of red and blue ribbons, which he had purchased with the louis, and with these, which were of all sizes, he had decorated the horses' ears, the harness, and the whole equipage.

On seeing this, the imitative people had literally metamorphosed the king's carriage into a cockade-shop.

The coachman and the footmen were profusely ornamented with them.

They had, moreover, slipped some dozens of them into the carriage itself.

However, it must be said that Monsieur de Lafayette, who had remained on horseback, had endeavored to restrain these honest propagators of the national colors, but had not been able to succeed.

And therefore, when the king came out: —

"Oh, oh!" cried he, on seeing this strange bedizenment of his equipage.

Then, with his hand he made a sign to Monsieur de Lafayette to approach him.

Monsieur de Lafayette respectfully advanced, lowering his sword as he came near the king.

"Monsieur de Lafayette," said the king to him, "I was looking for you to say to you that I confirm your appointment to the command of the National Guards."

And Louis XVI. got into his carriage amid a universal acclamation.

As to Gilbert, tranquillized henceforward as to the personal safety of the king, he had remained in the hall with Bailly and the electors.

The speechifying had not yet terminated.

However, on hearing the loud hurrahs which saluted the departure of the king, he approached a window, to cast a last glance on the square, and to observe the conduct of his two country friends.

They were both, or at least they appeared to be, still on the best terms with the king.

Suddenly Gilbert perceived a horseman advancing rapidly along the Quay Pelletier, covered with dust, and

obliging the crowd, which was still docile and respectful, to open its ranks and let him pass.

The people, who were good and complaisant on this great day, smiled while repeating: —

"One of the king's officers! — one of the king's officers!"

And cries of "Long live the king!" saluted the officer as he passed on, and women patted his horse's neck, which was white with foam.

This officer at last managed to reach the king's carriage, and arrived there at the moment when a servant was closing the door of it.

"What! is it you, Charny?" cried Louis XVI.

And then, in a lower tone: —

"How are they all out yonder?" he inquired.

Then, in a whisper: —

"The queen?"

"Very anxious, Sire," replied the officer, who had thrust his head completely into the carriage-window.

"Do you return to Versailles?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Well, then, tell our friends they have no cause for uneasiness. All has gone off marvellously well."

Charny bowed, raised his head, and perceived Monsieur de Lafayette, who made a friendly sign to him.

Charny went to him, and Lafayette shook hands with him; and the crowd, seeing this, almost carried both officer and horse as far as the quay, where, thanks to the vigilant orders given to the National Guards, a line was formed to facilitate the king's departure.

The king ordered that the carriage should move out at a walking pace, till it reached the Place Louis XV. There he found his body-guards, who were awaiting the return of the king, and not without impatience; so

that this impatience, in which every one participated, kept on increasing every moment, and the horses were driven on at a pace which increased in rapidity as they advanced upon the road to Versailles.

Gilbert, from the balcony of the window, had fully comprehended the meaning of the arrival of this horseman, although he did not know his person. He readily imagined the anguish which the queen must have suffered, and especially for the last three hours; for during that time he had not been able to despatch a single courier to Versailles, amid the throng by which he was surrounded, without exciting suspicion, or betraying weakness.

He had but a faint idea of all that had been occurring at Versailles.

We shall now return there with our readers, for we do not wish to make them read too long a course of history.

The queen had received the last courier from the king at three o'clock.

Gilbert had found means to despatch a courier just at the moment the king entered the Hôtel de Ville, under the arch formed by the swords of the National Guards.

The Countess de Charny was with the queen. The countess had only just left her bed, which from severe indisposition she had kept since the previous day.

She was still very pale. She had hardly strength to raise her eyes, the heavy lids of which seemed to be constantly falling, weighed down either with grief or shame.

The queen, on perceiving her, smiled, but with that habitual smile which appears, to those familiar with the court, to be stereotyped upon the lips of princes and of kings.

Then, as if overjoyed that her husband was in safety:—

"Good news again!" exclaimed the queen to those who surrounded her; "may the whole day pass off as well!"

"Oh, Madame!" said a courtier, "your Majesty alarms yourself too much. The Parisians know too well the responsibility which weighs upon them."

"But, Madame," said another courtier, who was not so confiding, "is your Majesty well assured as to the authenticity of this intelligence?"

"Oh, yes," replied the queen. "The person who writes to me has engaged, at the hazard of his head, to be responsible for the safety of the king. Moreover, I believe him to be a friend."

"Oh! if he is a friend," rejoined the courtier, bowing, "that is quite another matter."

Madame de Lamballe, who was standing at a little distance, approached.

"It is," said she, "the lately appointed physician, is it not?"

"Yes, Gilbert," unthinkingly replied the queen, without reflecting that she was striking a fearful blow at one who stood close beside her.

"Gilbert!" exclaimed Andrée, starting as if a viper had bit her to the heart; "Gilbert, your Majesty's friend!"

Andrée had turned round with flashing eyes, her hands clinched with anger and shame, and seemed proudly to accuse the queen, both by her looks and attitude.

"But still," said the queen, hesitating.

"Oh, Madame, Madame!" murmured Andrée, in a tone of the bitterest reproach.

A deathlike silence pervaded the whole room after this mysterious incident.

In the midst of this silence, a light step was heard upon the tesselated floor of the adjoining room.

"Monsieur de Charny!" said the queen, in a half-whisper, as if to warn Andrée to compose herself.

Charny had heard — he had seen all — only he could not comprehend it.

He remarked the pallid countenance of Andrée, and the embarrassed air of Marie Antoinette.

It would have been a breach of etiquette to question the queen, but Andrée was his wife; he had the right to question her.

He therefore went to her, and in the most friendly tone —

"What is the matter, Madame?" said he.

Andrée made an effort to recover her composure.

"Nothing, Count," she replied.

Charny then turned towards the queen, who, notwithstanding her profound experience in equivocal positions, had ten times essayed to muster up a smile, but could not succeed.

"You appear to doubt the devotedness of this Monsieur Gilbert," said he to Andrée. "Have you any motive for suspecting his fidelity?"

Andrée was silent.

"Speak, Madame; speak!" said Charny, insistingly.

Then, as Andrée still remained mute: —

"Oh, speak, Madame!" cried he. "This delicacy now becomes condemnable. Reflect that on it may depend the safety of our master."

"I do not know, sir, what can be your motive for saying that," replied Andrée.

"You said, and I heard you say it, Madame, — I appeal moreover to the princess," — and Charny bowed to the Princess de Lamballe, "you exclaimed with an ex-

pression of great surprise, 'Gilbert, your Majesty's friend!'"

"'T is true, you did say that, my dear," said the Princess de Lamballe, with her habitual ingenuousness.

Then, going closer to Andrée: —

"If you do know anything, Monsieur de Charny is right."

"For pity's sake, Madame! for pity's sake!" said Andrée, in an imploring tone, but so low that it could not be heard by any one but the princess.

The princess retired a few steps.

"Oh, good Heaven! it was but a trifling matter," said the queen, feeling that should she any longer delay to interfere, she would be betraying her trust. "The countess was expressing her apprehensions, which doubtless were but vague. She had said that it was difficult for a man who had taken part in the American Revolution, one who is the friend of Monsieur de Lafayette, to be our friend."

"Yes, vague," mechanically repeated Andrée, — "very vague."

"A fear of a similar nature to one which had been expressed by one of the gentlemen present before the countess had expressed hers," rejoined Marie Antoinette.

And with her eyes she pointed out the courtier whose doubts had given rise to this discussion.

But it required more than this to convince Charny. The great confusion which had appeared on his entering the room persuaded him that there was some mystery in the affair.

He therefore persisted.

"It matters not, Madame," said he. "It seems to me that it is your duty not to express vain fears, but on the contrary, to state precise facts."

"What, sir," said the queen, with some asperity, "you are returning to that subject!"

"Madame!"

"Your pardon, but I find that you are still questioning the Countess de Charny."

"Excuse me, Madame," said Charny; "it is from interest for—"

"For your self-love, is it not? Ah, Monsieur de Charny," added the queen, with an ironical expression of which the count felt the whole weight, "acknowledge the thing frankly. You are jealous."

"Jealous! jealous!" cried Charny, coloring, — "but of what? I ask this of your Majesty."

"Of your wife, apparently," replied the queen, harshly.

"Madame!" stammered Charny, perfectly astounded at this unlooked-for attack.

"It is perfectly natural," dryly rejoined Marie Antoinette; "and the countess assuredly is worth the trouble."

Charny darted a look at the queen, to warn her that she was going too far.

But this was useless trouble, superfluous precaution. When this lioness was wounded, and felt the burning pain galling her heart, she no longer knew restraint.

"Yes, I can comprehend your being jealous, Monsieur de Charny, — jealous and uneasy; it is the natural state of every soul that loves, and which consequently is on the watch."

"Madame!" repeated Charny.

"And therefore I," pursued the queen, — "I experience precisely the same feelings which you do at this moment, I am at once a prey to jealousy and anxiety." She emphasized the word "jealousy." "The king is at Paris, and I no longer live."

"But, Madame," observed Charny, who could not at all comprehend the meaning of this storm, the thunder of which appeared to growl more fiercely and the lightnings to flash more vividly every moment, "you have just now received news of the king; the news was good, and you must feel more tranquil."

"And did you feel tranquillized when the countess and myself, a moment ago, endeavored to reassure you?"

Charny bit his lip.

Andrée began to raise her head, at once surprised and alarmed, — surprised at what she heard, alarmed at what she thought she understood.

The silence which had ensued after the first question which Charny had addressed to Andrée was now renewed, and the company seemed anxiously awaiting Charny's answer to the queen. Charny remained silent.

"In fact," resumed the queen, with still increasing anger, "it is the destiny of people who love to think only of the object of their affection. It would be happiness to those poor hearts to sacrifice pitilessly everything — yes, everything — to the feeling by which they are agitated. Good Heaven! how anxious am I with regard to the king!"

One of the courtiers ventured to remark that other couriers would arrive.

"Oh, why am I not at Paris, instead of being here? why am I not with the king?" said Marie Antoinette, who had seen that Charny had become agitated since she had been endeavoring to instil that jealousy into his mind which she so violently experienced.

Charny bowed.

"If it be only that, Madame," said he, "I will go there; and if, as your Majesty apprehends, the king is in any danger, if that valuable life be exposed, you may

rely, Madame, that it shall not be from not having exposed mine in his defence."

Charny bowed and moved towards the door.

"Sir! sir!" cried Andrée, rushing between Charny and the door; "be careful of yourself!"

Nothing was wanting to the completion of this scene but this outburst of the fears of Andrée.

And therefore, as soon as Andrée had been thus impelled, in spite of herself, to cast aside her habitual coldness, no sooner had she uttered these imprudent words and evinced this unwonted solicitude, than the queen became frightfully pale.

"Why, Madame," she cried to Andrée, "how is this, that you here usurp the part of a queen?"

"Who, — I, Madame?" stammered Andrée, comprehending that she had, for the first time, allowed to burst forth from her lips the fire which for so long a period had consumed her soul.

"What!" continued Marie Antoinette, "your husband is in the king's service. He is about to set out to seek the king. If he is exposing his life, it is for the king; and when the question is the service of the king, you advise Monsieur de Charny to be careful of himself."

On hearing these appalling words, Andrée was near fainting. She staggered, and would have fallen to the floor had not Charny rushed forward and caught her in his arms.

An indignant look, which Charny could not restrain, completed the despair of Marie Antoinette, who had considered herself an offended rival, but who, in fact, had been an unjust queen.

"The queen is right," at length said Charny, with some effort, "and your emotion, Madame, was inconsid-

erate. You have no husband, Madame, when the interests of the king are in question; and I ought to be the first to request you to restrain your sensibility, if I presumed that you deigned to feel any alarm for me."

Then, turning towards Marie Antoinette: —

"I am at the queen's orders," said he, coldly, "and I set out at once. It is I who will bring you news of the king, — good news, Madame, or I will not bring any."

Then, having spoken these words, he bowed almost to the ground, and left the room before the queen, moved at once by terror and by anger, had thought of detaining him.

A moment afterwards the hoofs of a horse galloping at full speed rang over the pavement of the courtyard.

The queen remained motionless, but a prey to internal agitation, so much the more terrible from her making the most violent efforts to conceal it.

Some understood, while others could not comprehend the cause of this agitation; but they all showed that they respected their sovereign's tranquillity.

Marie Antoinette was left to her own thoughts.

Andrée withdrew with the rest from the apartment, abandoning Marie Antoinette to the caresses of her two children, whom she had sent for, and who had been brought to her.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RETURN.

Night had returned, bringing with it its train of fears and gloomy visions, when suddenly shouts were heard from the front of the palace.

The queen started and rose. She was not far from a window, which she opened.

Almost at the same instant, servants, transported with joy, ran into the queen's room, crying : —

"A courier, Madame, a courier!"

Three minutes afterwards, a hussar rushed into the antechamber.

He was a lieutenant despatched by Monsieur de Charny. He had ridden at full speed from Sèvres.

"And the king?" said Marie Antoinette.

"His Majesty will be here in a quarter of an hour," replied the officer, who was so much out of breath that he could scarcely articulate.

"Safe and well?" asked the queen.

"Safe, well, and smiling, Madame," replied the officer.

"You have seen him, then?"

"No, Madame, but Monsieur de Charny told me so, when he sent me off."

The queen started once more at hearing this name, which chance had thus associated with that of the king.

"I thank you, sir; you had better rest yourself," said the queen to the young gentleman.

The young officer made his obeisance and withdrew.

Marie Antoinette, taking her children by the hand, went towards the grand entrance of the palace, where were already assembled all the courtiers and the servants.

The penetrating eye of the queen perceived, on the first step, a female form attired in white, her elbow leaning upon the stone balustrade, and looking eagerly into the darkness, that she might first discern the approach of the king's carriage.

It was Andrée, whom even the presence of the queen did not arouse from her fixed gaze.

She, who generally was so eager to fly to the side of her mistress, evidently had not seen her, or disdained to appear to have seen her.

Andrée, then, bore the queen ill-will for the levity which she had shown that afternoon, and from which cruel levity Andrée had so much suffered.

Or else, carried away by the deepest concern, she was with eager anxiety looking for the return of Charny, for whom she had manifested so much affectionate apprehension.

A twofold poniard-stab to the queen, which deepened a wound that was still bleeding.

She lent but an absent ear to the compliments and joyful congratulations of her other friends, and the courtiers generally.

She even felt for a moment her mind abstracted from the violent grief which had overwhelmed her all the evening. There was even a respite to the anxiety excited in her heart by the king's journey, threatened by so many enemies.

But with her strong mind she soon chased all that was not legitimate affection from her heart. At the feet of God she cast her jealousy. She immolated her anger

and her secret feelings to the holiness of her conjugal vow.

It was doubtless God who thus endowed her, for her quiet and support, with this faculty of loving the king, her husband, beyond every being in the world.

At that moment, at least, she so felt, or thought she felt it; the pride of royalty raised the queen above all terrestrial passions, — love of the king was her egotism.

She had therefore driven from her breast all the petty vengeance of a woman, and the coquettish frivolity of the lover, when the flambeaux of the escort appeared at the end of the avenue.

These lights increased in volume every moment, from the rapidity with which the escort advanced.

They could hear the neighing and the hard breathing of the horses. The ground trembled, amid the silence of the night, beneath the weight of the squadrons which surrounded and followed the king's carriage.

The gates were thrown open; the guards rushed forth to receive the king with shouts of enthusiasm. The carriage rolled sonorously over the pavement of the great courtyard.

Dazzled, delighted, fascinated, strongly excited by the varied emotions she had experienced during the whole day, by those which she then felt, the queen flew down the stairs to receive the king.

Louis XVI., as soon as he had alighted from his carriage, ascended the staircase with all the rapidity which was possible, surrounded as he was by his officers, all agitated by the events of the day and their triumph; while in the courtyard, the guards, mixing unceremoniously with the grooms and equerries, tore from the carriages and the harness all the cockades which the enthusiasm of the Parisians had attached to them.

The king and the queen met upon a marble landing. The queen, with a cry of joy and love, several times pressed the king to her heart.

She sobbed as if, on thus meeting him, she had believed she was never again to see him.

Yielding thus to the emotions of an overflowing heart, she did not observe the silent pressure of their hands which Charny and Andrée had just exchanged.

This pressure of the hand was nothing; but Andrée was at the foot of the steps; she was the first Charny had seen and touched.

The queen, after having presented her children to the king, made him kiss them; and then the dauphin, seeing in his father's hat the new cockade, on which the torches cast an ensanguined light, exclaimed with childish astonishment: —

"Why, Papa, what have you on your cockade? Is it blood?"

It was the national red.

The queen uttered a cry, and examined it in her turn.

The king bent down his head, under the pretence of again kissing his little daughter, but in reality to conceal his shame.

Marie Antoinette, with profound disgust, tore the cockade from the hat, without seeing — the noble, furious woman — that she was wounding to the heart a nation that would one day know how to avenge itself.

"Throw it away, Sire," said she; "throw it away!"

And she threw the cockade down the stairs, upon which trampled the feet of the whole escort which accompanied the king to his apartments.

This strange transition had extinguished all conjugal enthusiasm in the queen's breast. She looked around,

but without apparent intention, for Monsieur de Charny, who was standing at his ordinary post near the king, with the stiff formality of a soldier.

"I thank you, sir," she said to him, when their eyes met, after several moments of hesitation on the part of the count, — "I thank you, sir. You have well fulfilled your promise."

"To whom are you speaking?" inquired the king.

"To Monsieur de Charny," said she, boldly.

"Yes, poor Charny! he had trouble enough to get near me. And Gilbert — what has become of him? I do not see him," added Louis.

The queen, who had become more cautious since the lesson of the afternoon, called out: —

"Come in to supper, Sire," in order to change the conversation. "Monsieur de Charny," pursued she, "find the Countess de Charny, and bring her with you. We will have a family supper."

In this she acted as a queen. But she sighed on observing that Charny, who till then had appeared gloomy, at once became smiling and joyful.

CHAPTER X.

FOULON.

BILLOT was in a state of perfect ecstasy.

He had taken the Bastille; he had restored Gilbert to liberty; he had been noticed by Lafayette, who called him by his name; and finally, he had seen the burial of Foulon.

Few men in those days were as much execrated as Foulon. One only could in this respect have competed with him, and this was his son-in-law, Monsieur Berthier de Savigny.

They had both of them been singularly lucky the day following the capture of the Bastille.

Foulon died on that day, and Berthier had managed to escape from Paris.

That which had raised to its climax the unpopularity of Foulon, was that on the retirement of Monsieur Necker he had accepted the place of the "virtuous Genevese," as he was then called, and had been comptroller-general during three days.

And therefore was there much singing and dancing at his burial.

The people had at one time thought of taking the body out of the coffin and hanging it; but Billot had jumped upon a post, and had made a speech on the respect due to the dead, and the hearse was allowed to continue on its way.

As to Pitou, he had become a perfect hero.

Pitou had become the friend of Monsieur Elie and Monsieur Hullin, who deigned to employ him to execute their commissions.

He was, besides, the confidant of Billot, — of Billot, who had been treated with distinction by Monsieur de Lafayette, as we have already said, who sometimes employed him as a police guard about his person, on account of his brawny shoulders, his herculean fists, and his indomitable courage.

Since the journey of the king to Paris, Gilbert, who had been, through Monsieur Necker, put in communication with the principal members of the National Assembly and the Municipality, was incessantly occupied with the education of the republic, still in its infancy.

He therefore neglected Billot and Pitou, who, neglected by him, threw themselves ardently into the meetings of the citizens, in the midst of which political discussions of transcendent interest were constantly agitated.

At length, one day, after Billot had employed three hours in giving his opinion to the electors as to the best mode of victualling Paris, and fatigued with his long speech, though proud of having played the orator, he was resting with delight, lulled by the monotonous voices of his successors, which he took good care not to listen to, Pitou came in, greatly agitated; and gliding like an eel through the Sessions Hall of the electors in the Hôtel de Ville, and in a palpitating tone, which contrasted greatly with the usual placidity of his enunciation: "Oh, Monsieur Billot!" said he, "dear Monsieur Billot!"

"Well, what is it?"

"Great news!"

"Good news?"

"Glorious news!"

"What is it, then?"

"You know that I had gone to the club of the Virtues, at the Fontainebleau barrier?"

"Yes, and what then?"

"Well, they spoke there of a most extraordinary event."

"What was it?"

"Do you know that that villain Foulon passed himself off for dead, and carried it so far as to allow himself to be buried?"

"How! passed himself for dead? How say you, — pretended to allow himself to be buried? Nonsense! He is dead enough; for was I not at his funeral?"

"Notwithstanding that, Monsieur Billot, he is still living."

"Living?"

"As much alive as you and I are."

"You are mad!"

"Dear Monsieur Billot, I am not mad. The traitor, Foulon, the enemy of the people, the leech of France, the peculator, is not dead."

"But since I tell you he was buried after an apoplectic fit, since I tell you that I saw the funeral go by, and even that I prevented the people from dragging him out of his coffin to hang him?"

"And I have just seen him alive. Ah, what do you say to that?"

"You?"

"As plainly as I now see you, Monsieur Billot. It appears that it was one of his servants who died, and the villain gave him an aristocratic funeral. Oh, all is discovered! It was from fear of the vengeance of the people that he acted thus."

"Tell me all about it, Pitou."

"Come into the vestibule for a moment, then, Monsieur Billot. We shall be more at our ease there."

They left the hall and went into the vestibule.

"First of all, we must know whether Monsieur Bailly is here."

"Go on with your story; he is here."

"Good! Well I was at the club of the Virtues, listening to the speech of a patriot. Did n't he make grammatical faults! It was easily seen that he had not been educated by the Abbé Fortier."

"Go on, I tell you. A man may be a good patriot, and yet not be able to read or write."

"That is true," replied Pitou. "Well, suddenly a man came in, completely out of breath. 'Victory!' cried he. 'Victory! Foulon was not dead! Foulon is still alive! I have found him! I have found him!'

"Everybody there was like you, Father Billot. No one would believe him. Some said, 'How! Foulon?' 'Yes.' Others said, 'Pshaw! impossible!' And others said, 'Well, while you were at it, you might as well have discovered his son-in-law, Berthier.'"

"Berthier!" cried Billot.

"Yes, Berthier de Savigny. Don't you recollect our intendant at Compiègne, the friend of Monsieur Isidore de Charny?"

"Undoubtedly! he who was always so proud with everybody, and so polite with Catherine?"

"Precisely," said Pitou; "one of those horrible contractors, — a second leech to the French people; the execration of all human nature; the shame of the civilized world, as said the virtuous Loustalot."

"Well, go on! go on!" cried Billot.

"That is true," said Pitou; "*ad eventum festina*, — which means to say, Monsieur Billot, 'Hasten to the winding up.' I shall proceed, then. A man, out of

breath, comes running to the club of the Virtues, and shouts : 'I have found Foulon. I have found him.'

"You should have heard the vociferations that followed."

"He was mistaken," said Billot, obstinately.

"He was not, for I have seen Foulon."

"You have seen him, Pitou?"

"With these two eyes. Wait a moment."

"I am waiting; but you make my blood boil."

"Ah, but listen. I am hot enough too. I tell you that he had given it out that he was dead, and had one of his servants buried in his place. Fortunately, Providence was watching."

"Providence, indeed!" disdainfully exclaimed the Voltairean Billot.

"I intended to say the nation," rejoined Pitou, with humility. "This good citizen, this patriot, out of breath, who announced the news to us, recognized him at Viry, where he had concealed himself."

"Ah! ah!"

"Having recognized him, he denounced him, and the syndic, whose name is Monsieur Rappe, instantly arrested him."

"And what is the name of the brave patriot who had the courage to do all this?"

"Of informing against Foulon?"

"Yes."

"Well, his name is Monsieur Saint-Jean."

"Saint-Jean! Why, that is a lackey's name."

"And he was precisely the lackey of the villain Foulon. Aristocrat, you are rightly served. Why had you lackeys?"

"Pitou, you interest me," said Billot, going close to the narrator.

"You are very kind, Monsieur Billot. Well, then,

here is Foulon denounced and arrested; they are bringing him to Paris. The informer had run on ahead to announce the news, and receive the reward for his denunciation; and sure enough, in a few moments afterwards Foulon arrived at the barrier."

"And it was there that you saw him?"

"Yes. He had a very queer look, I can tell you. They had twisted a bunch of stinging-nettles round his neck, by way of cravat."

"What say you? stinging-nettles? And what was that for?"

"Because it appears that he had said — rascal as he is! — that bread was for men, oats for horses, but that nettles were good enough for the people."

"Did he say that, the wretch?"

"Yes! by Heaven! he said so, Monsieur Billot."

"Good! there, now, you are swearing."

"Bah!" cried Pitou, with a swaggering air, "between military men! Well, they brought him along on foot, and the whole of the way they were giving him smashing blows on his back and head."

"Oh! oh!" cried Billot, somewhat less enthusiastic.

"It was very amusing," continued Pitou, "only that everybody could not get at him to give him a blow, seeing that there were ten thousand persons hooting after him."

"And after this?" asked Billot, who began to reflect.

"After that they took him to the president of the St. Marcel district, — a good patriot, you know."

"Yes, Monsieur Acloque."

"Cloque, — yes, that is it; who ordered him to be taken to the Hôtel de Ville, seeing that he did not know what to do with him; so that you will presently see him."

"But how happens it that it is you who have come to announce this, and not the famous Saint-Jean?"

"Why, because my legs are six inches longer than his. He had set off before me, but I soon came up with, and passed him. I wanted to inform you first, that you might inform Monsieur Bailly of it."

"What luck you have, Pitou!"

"I shall have much more than this to-morrow."

"And how can you tell that?"

"Because this same Saint-Jean, who denounced Monsieur Foulon, proposed a plan to catch Monsieur Berthier, who has run away."

"He knows, then, where he is?"

"Yes; it appears that he was their confidential man, — this good Monsieur Saint-Jean, — and that he received a great deal of money from Foulon and his son-in-law, who wished to bribe him."

"And he took the money?"

"Certainly, the money of an aristocrat is always good to take; but he said: 'A good patriot will not betray his nation for money.'"

"Yes," murmured Billot, "he betrays his masters, — that is all. Do you know, Pitou, that your Monsieur Saint-Jean appears to me to be a worthless vagabond?"

"That is possible, but it matters not; they will take Monsieur Berthier, as they have taken Master Foulon, and they will hang them nose to nose. What horrid wry faces they will make, looking at each other, — hey?"

"And why should they be hanged?"

"Why, because they are vile rascals, and I detest them."

"What! Monsieur Berthier, who has been at the farm, — Monsieur Berthier, who, during his tours into the

Île-de-France, has drunk our milk, and eaten of our bread, and sent gold buckles to Catherine from Paris? Oh, no, no! they shall not hang him."

"Bah!" repeated Pitou, ferociously, "he is an aristocrat, — a wheedling rascal!"

Billot looked at Pitou with stupefaction. Beneath the gaze of the farmer, Pitou blushed to the very whites of his eyes.

Suddenly the worthy cultivator perceived Monsieur Bailly, who was going from the hall into his own cabinet; he rushed after him to inform him of the news.

But it was now for Billot in his turn to be treated with incredulity.

"Foulon! Foulon!" cried the mayor, "what folly!"

"Well, Monsieur Bailly, all I can say is, here is Pitou, who saw him."

"I saw him, Monsieur Mayor," said Pitou, placing his hand on his heart, and bowing.

And he related to Monsieur Bailly all he had before related to Billot.

They observed that poor Bailly turned very pale; he at once understood the extent of the catastrophe.

"And Monsieur Acloque sends him here?" murmured he.

"Yes, Monsieur Mayor."

"But how is he sending him?"

"Oh, there is no occasion to be uneasy," said Pitou, who misunderstood the anxiety of Bailly; "there are plenty of people to guard the prisoner. He will not be carried off."

"Would to God he might be carried off!" murmured Bailly.

Then turning to Pitou: —

"Plenty of people, — what mean you by that, my friend?"

"I mean plenty of people."

"People!"

"More than twenty thousand men, without counting the women," said Pitou, triumphantly.

"Unhappy man!" exclaimed Bailly. "Gentlemen, gentlemen electors!"

And he related to the electors all he had just heard.

While he was speaking, exclamations and cries of anguish burst forth from all present.

The silence of terror pervaded the hall, during which a confused, distant, indescribable noise assailed the ears of those assembled, like that produced by the rushing of blood to the head in attacks upon the brain.

"What is that?" inquired an elector.

"Why, the noise of the crowd, to be sure," replied another.

Suddenly a carriage was heard rolling rapidly across the square; it contained two armed men, who helped a third to alight from it, who was pale and trembling.

Foulon had at length become so exhausted by the ill usage he had experienced that he could no longer walk; and he had been lifted into a coach.

Behind the carriage, led on by Saint-Jean, who was more out of breath than ever, ran about a hundred young men, from sixteen to eighteen years of age, with haggard countenances and flaming eyes.

They cried, "Foulon! Foulon!" running almost as fast as the horses.

The two armed men were, however, some few steps in advance of them, which gave them the time to push Foulon into the Hôtel de Ville; and its doors were closed against the hoarse barkers from without.

"At last we have him here," said his guards to the electors, who were waiting at the top of the stairs. "By Heaven! it was not without trouble!"

"Gentlemen! gentlemen!" cried Foulon, trembling, "will you save me?"

"Ah, sir," replied Bailly, with a sigh, "you have been very culpable."

"And yet, sir," said Foulon, entreatingly, his agitation increasing, "there will, I hope, be justice to defend me."

At this moment the exterior tumult was redoubled.

"Hide him quickly!" cried Bailly to those around him, "or—"

He turned to Foulon.

"Listen to me," said he; "the situation is serious enough for you to be consulted. Will you — perhaps it is not yet too late — will you endeavor to escape from the back part of the Hôtel de Ville?"

"Oh, no," exclaimed Foulon; "I should be recognized — massacred!"

"Do you prefer to remain here in the midst of us? I will do, and these gentlemen will do, all that is humanly possible to defend you; will you not, gentlemen?"

"We promise it," cried all the electors, with one voice.

"Oh, I prefer remaining with you, gentlemen. Gentlemen, do not abandon me!"

"I have told you, sir," replied Bailly, with dignity, "that we will do all that may be humanly possible to save you."

At that moment a frightful clamor arose from the square, ascended into the air, and invaded the Hôtel de Ville through the open windows.

"Do you hear? Do you hear?" murmured Foulon, perfectly livid with terror.

In fact, the mob had rushed, howling and frightful to behold, from all the streets leading to the Hôtel de Ville, and above all from the Quay Pelletier, and the Rue de la Vannerie.

Bailly went to a window.

Knives, pikes, scythes, and muskets glistened in the sunshine. In less than ten minutes the vast square was filled with people. It was the whole of Foulon's train, of which Pitou had spoken, and which had been increased by curious idlers, who, hearing a great noise, had run to the Place de Grève as towards a common centre.

All these voices, and there were more than twenty thousand, cried incessantly: "Foulon! Foulon!"

Then it was seen that the hundred young men who had been the precursors of this furious mob, pointed out to this howling mass the gate by which Foulon had entered the building; this gate was instantly threatened, and they began to beat it down with the butt-ends of their muskets, and with crowbars.

Suddenly it flew open.

The guards of the Hôtel de Ville appeared, and advanced upon the assailants, who, in their first terror, retreated, and left a large open space in the front of the building.

This guard stationed itself upon the front steps, and presented a bold front to the crowd.

The officers, moreover, instead of threatening, harangued the crowd in friendly terms, and endeavored to calm it by their protestations.

Bailly had become quite confused. It was the first time that the poor astronomer had found himself in opposition to the popular tempest.

"What is to be done?" demanded he of the electors, —"what is to be done?"

"We must try him."

"No trial can take place when under the intimidation of the mob," said Bailly.

"Zounds!" exclaimed Billot, "have you not, then, men enough to defend you?"

"We have not two hundred men."

"You must have a reinforcement, then."

"Oh, if Monsieur de Lafayette were but informed of this!"

"Well, send and inform him of it."

"And who would venture to attempt it? Who could make his way through such a multitude?"

"I would," replied Billot.

And he was about to leave the hall.

Bailly stopped him.

"Madman!" cried he; "look at that ocean! You would be swallowed up even by one of its waves. If you wish to get to Monsieur de Lafayette, — and even then I would not answer for your safety, — go out by one of the back doors. Go!"

"'T is well!" tranquilly replied Billot.

And he darted out of the room with the swiftness of an arrow.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FATHER-IN-LAW.

THE clamor, which kept on constantly increasing from the square, clearly proved that the exasperation of the mob was becoming greater. It was no longer hatred that they felt; it was abhorrence. They no longer merely threatened; they foamed.

The cries of "Down with Foulon! Death to Foulon!" crossed each other in the air, like projectiles in a bombardment. The crowd, which was still augmenting, pressed nearer to the entrance of the Hôtel de Ville, till they, as it may be said, almost suffocated the civic guards at their posts.

And already there began to circulate among the crowd, and to increase in volume, those rumors which are the precursors of violence.

These rumors no longer threatened Foulon only, but the electors who protected him.

"They have let the prisoner escape!" said some.

"Let us go in! let us go in!" said others.

"Let us set fire to the Hôtel de Ville!"

"Forward! forward!"

Bailly felt that as Monsieur de Lafayette did not arrive, there was only one resource left to them.

And this was that the electors should themselves go down, mix in with the groups, and endeavor to pacify the most furious among them.

"Foulon! Foulon!"

Such was the incessant cry, the constant roaring of those furious waves.

A general assault was preparing; the walls could not have resisted it.

"Sir," said Bailly to Foulon, "if you do not show yourself to the crowd, they will naturally believe that we have allowed you to escape. Then they will force the door, and will come in here; and when once here, should they find you, I can no longer be responsible for anything."

"Oh, I did not know that I was so much execrated!" exclaimed Foulon.

And supported by Bailly, he dragged himself to the window.

A fearful cry resounded immediately on his presenting himself. The guards were driven back; the doors broken in; a torrent of men precipitated themselves up the staircase into the corridors, into the rooms, which were invaded in an instant.

Bailly threw around the prisoner all the guards who were within call, and then he began to harangue the crowd.

He wished to make these men understand that to assassinate might sometimes be doing justice, but that it was never an act of justice.

He succeeded, after having made the most strenuous efforts, after having twenty times perilled his own existence.

"Yes, yes," cried the assailants, "let him be tried! let him be tried! but let him be hanged!"

They were at this point in the argument when General de Lafayette reached the Hôtel de Ville, conducted there by Billot.

The sight of his tricolored plume — one of the first

which had been worn — at once assuaged their anger, and the tumult ceased.

The commander-in-chief of the National Guard had the way cleared for him, and addressing the crowd, repeated, though in more energetic terms, every argument that Bailly had endeavored to enforce.

His speech produced a great effect on all those who were near enough to hear it, and the cause of Foulon was completely gained in the electors' hall.

But on the square were twenty thousand furious people who had not heard Monsieur de Lafayette, and who remained implacable in their frenzy.

"Come, now," said Lafayette, at the conclusion of his oration, very naturally imagining that the effect he had produced on those who surrounded him had extended to all outside, — "come, now, this man must be tried."

"Yes," cried the mob.

"And consequently I order that he be taken to prison," added Lafayette.

"To prison! to prison!" howled the mob.

At the same time the general made a sign to the guards of the Hôtel de Ville, who led the prisoner forward.

The crowd outside understood nothing of all that was going on, excepting that their prey was about to appear. They had not even an idea that any one had the slightest hope of disputing it with them.

They scented, if we may be permitted the expression, the odor of the human flesh which was descending the staircase.

Billot had placed himself at the window with several electors, whom Bailly also joined in order to follow the prisoner with their eyes while he was crossing the square, escorted by the civic guards.

On the way, Foulon here and there addressed a few incoherent words to those around him, which, although they were protestations of confidence, clearly evinced the most profound and ill-disguised terror.

"Noble people," said he, while descending the staircase, "I fear nothing; I am in the midst of my fellow-citizens."

And already bantering laughs and insults were being uttered around him, when suddenly he found himself outside of the gloomy archway at the top of the stone steps which led into the square, and felt on his face the wind and sunshine.

Immediately one general cry — a cry of rage, a howling threat, a roar of hatred — burst from twenty thousand lungs. On this explosion of the public feeling, the guards conducting the prisoner are lifted from the ground, broken, dispersed; Foulon is seized by twenty powerful arms, raised above their shoulders, and carried into the fatal corner under the lamp-post, — ignoble and brutal executioner of the anger of the people, which they termed their justice.

Billot from his window saw all this, and cried out against it; the electors also did all they could to stimulate the guards, but they were powerless.

Lafayette, in despair, rushed out of the Hôtel de Ville, but he could not break through the first rank of that crowd, which spread out like an immense lake between him and the victim.

The mere spectators of this scene jumped upon posts, on window-sills, on every jutting part of a building, in order to gain a better view; and they encouraged by their savage shouts the frightful effervescence of the actors.

The latter were playing with their victim, as would a troop of tigers with an inoffensive prey.

They were disputing who should hang Foulon; at last they understood that if they wished to enjoy his agony, it was necessary that their several functions should be agreed upon.

But for that he would have been torn to pieces.

Some of them raised up Foulon, who had no longer strength enough to cry out.

Others, who had taken off his cravat and torn off his coat, placed a rope round his neck.

And others, who had climbed up the lamp-post, had handed to their companions below the rope which they put round the neck of the ex-minister.

For a moment they raised Foulon above their heads and showed him thus to the crowd, — a rope twined round his neck, and his hands tied behind him.

Then, when the crowd had had due time to contemplate the sufferer; when they had clapped their hands sufficiently, — the signal was given, and Foulon, pale and bleeding, was hoisted up to a level with the lantern, amid a hooting which was more terrible even than death.

All those who, up to that time, had not been able to see anything, then perceived the public enemy raised above the heads of the crowd.

New shouts were then heard; but these were against the executioners. Were they about to kill Foulon so expeditiously?

The executioners merely shrugged their shoulders, and pointed to the rope.

The rope was old; it could be seen to give way, strand by strand. The movements which Foulon made in his desperate agony at length broke the last strand; and Foulon, only half strangled, fell heavily upon the pavement.

He was only at the preface of his torments; he had only penetrated into the vestibule of death.

They all rushed towards the sufferer; they were perfectly secure with regard to him. There was no chance of his escaping them; in falling he had broken his leg a little below the knee.

And yet some imprecations arose, imprecations which were unintelligible and calumniatory. The executioners were accused; they were considered as clumsy and unskilful, — they who, on the contrary, had been so ingenious that they had expressly chosen an old worn-out rope, in the hope that it would break.

A hope which the event, as has been related, had fully realized.

They made a knot in the rope, and again fixed it round the neck of the unhappy man, who, half dead, with haggard eyes looked around, endeavoring to discover whether in that city which is called the centre of the civilized universe, — whether one of the bayonets of that king whose minister he had been, and who had a hundred thousand, would not be raised in his defence amid that horde of cannibals.

But there was nothing there to meet his eyes but hatred, but insult, but death.

"At least, kill me at once, without making me endure these atrocious torments!" cried the despairing Foulon.

"Well, now," replied a jeering voice, "why should we abridge your torments? you have made ours last long enough."

"And besides," said another, "you have not yet had time enough to digest your nettles."

"Wait, wait a little!" cried a third; "his son-in-law, Berthier, will be brought to him; there is room enough for him on the opposite lamp-post."

"We shall see what wry faces the father-in-law and son-in-law will make at each other," added another.

"Finish me; finish me at once!" cried the wretched man.

During this time, Bailly and Lafayette were begging, supplicating, exclaiming, and endeavoring to get through the crowd; suddenly, Foulon was again hoisted by the rope, which again broke, and their prayers, their supplications, their agony, no less painful than that of the sufferer himself, were lost, confounded, and extinguished amid the universal laugh which accompanied this second fall.

Bailly and Lafayette, who three days before had been the sovereign arbiters of the will of six hundred thousand Parisians, — a child now would not listen to them; the people even murmured at them; they were in their way; they were interrupting this great spectacle.

Billot had vainly given them all the aid of his uncommon strength; the powerful athlete had knocked down twenty men, but in order to reach Foulon it would be necessary to knock down fifty, a hundred, two hundred; and his strength is exhausted, and when he pauses to wipe from his brow the perspiration and the blood which is streaming from it, Foulon is raised a third time to the pulley of the lamp-post.

This time they had taken compassion upon him; the rope was a new one.

At last the condemned is dead; the victim no longer suffers.

Half a minute had sufficed to the crowd to assure itself that the vital spark was extinguished. And now that the tiger has killed, he may devour his prey.

The body, thrown from the top of the lamp-post, did

not even fall to the ground. It was torn to pieces before it reached it.

The head was separated from the trunk in a second, and in another second raised on the end of a pike. It was very much in fashion in those days to carry the heads of one's enemies in that way.

At this sanguinary spectacle Bailly was horrified. That head appeared to him to be the head of the Medusa of ancient days.

Lafayette, pale, his drawn sword in his hand, with disgust repulsed the guards who had surrounded him, to excuse themselves for not having been the strongest.

Billot, stamping his feet with rage, and kicking right and left, like one of own fiery Perche horses, returned into the Hôtel de Ville, that he might see no more of what was passing on that ensanguined square.

As to Pitou, his fieriness of popular vengeance was changed into a convulsive movement; and he had fled to the river's bank, where he closed his eyes and stopped his ears, that he might neither see nor hear.

Consternation reigned in the Hôtel de Ville; the electors began to comprehend that they would never be able to direct the movements of the people, save in the manner which should suit the people.

All at once, while the furious mob were amusing themselves with dragging the mutilated remains of Foulon through the gutters, a new cry, a new shout, rolling like distant thunder, was heard, proceeding from the opposite side of the river.

A courier was seen galloping over the bridge. The news he was bringing was already known to the crowd. They had guessed it from the signs of their most skilful leaders, as a pack of hounds take up the scent from the inspiration of their finest-nosed and best-practised bloodhounds.

The crowd rush to meet this courier, whom they surround; they scent that he has touched their new prey; they feel that he is going to speak of Monsieur Berthier.

And it was true.

Interrogated by ten thousand voices, all howling at once, the courier is compelled to reply to them.

"Monsieur Berthier de Savigny has been arrested at Compiègne."

Then he proceeds into the Hôtel de Ville, where he announces the same tidings to Lafayette and to Bailly.

"Good; good! I knew it," said Lafayette.

"We knew it," said Bailly, "and orders have been given that he should be kept there."

"Kept there?" repeated the courier.

"Undoubtedly; I have sent two commissaries with an escort."

"An escort of two hundred and fifty men, was it not?" said an elector; "it is more than sufficient."

"Gentlemen," replied the courier, "this is precisely what I was sent to tell you. The escort has been dispersed and the prisoner carried off by the multitude."

"Carried off!" exclaimed Lafayette. "Has the escort allowed the prisoner to be carried off?"

"Do not blame them, General; all that it was possible to do, they did."

"But Monsieur Berthier?" anxiously inquired Bailly.

"They are bringing him to Paris; and he is at Bourget by this time."

"But should they bring him here," cried Billot, "he is lost."

"Quick! quick!" cried Lafayette, "five hundred men to Bourget. Let the commissioners and Monsieur Berthier stop there; let them sleep there! During the night we will consider what is to be done."

"But who would venture to undertake such a commission?" said the courier, who was looking with terror at that waving sea of heads, every wave of which sent forth its threatening roar.

"I will!" cried Billot; "at least, I will save *him*."

"But you would perish in the attempt," cried the courier; "the road is black with people."

"I will go, nevertheless," said the farmer.

"It is useless now," murmured Bailly, who had been listening to the noises from without. "Hush! Do you not hear that?"

They then heard, from the direction of the Porte St. Martin, a rushing noise like that of the sea when beating over the shingles on a beach.

This frenzied howl came to them over the roofs like steam over the sides of a boiling caldron.

"It is too late," said Lafayette.

"They are coming! they are coming!" murmured the courier. "Do you not hear them?"

"A regiment! a regiment!" cried Lafayette, with that generous ebullition of humanity which was the most brilliant feature of his character.

"What! By God's death!" exclaimed Bailly, who swore perhaps for the first time in his life, "you seem to forget that our army — ours! — is precisely that crowd whom you wish to fight."

And he hid his face in his hands.

The shouts which had been heard in the distance were re-echoed by the people in the streets, and thus communicated to the crowd upon the square with the rapidity of a train of gunpowder.

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